

Clanwilliam was another veteran with a fine record of service and endowed with exceptional strength of character. Sir William Dowell was equally excellent, who under a soft and almost retiring manner concealed a remarkable aptitude for always getting whatever he wanted done quickly and effectively. Sir George Willes and Admiral Baird were, again, two most competent seamen and administrators.

Of the younger men the most remarkable was Admiral Tryon, whose career was cut short by the terrible accident which occurred to the *Victoria*, his flagship, when he was Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. Tryon was a man of marked ability and resource. In all the naval manœuvres in which he commanded he invariably outwitted his opponent, and he had a very high reputation in the Navy for his foresight, his thoroughness and his resource. When he was Admiral of the Naval Reserves he had a scheme which required Treasury assent as it involved certain expenditure, and a Committee was appointed to go into the subject, the representative of the Treasury being Sir Reginald (afterwards Lord) Welby. Welby was almost hypochondriacal in his dread of disease and illness. The meetings of the Committee were held in Spring Gardens. Before the last meeting, at which it was thought that Welby might be recalcitrant, Tryon had all the windows of the room thrown open. It was a very cold day, and the atmosphere became icy. In came Welby, who at once remarked, "How cold the room is!" "Yes," said Tryon; "it is better to have a cold room than to catch typhoid fever. The smells in this neighbourhood are so awful that the only preventive is to keep all the windows wide open." As soon as Welby heard this, he thought that the quicker the matter

was settled the better would he preserve his health. Tryon thus obtained an involuntary assent to his scheme, which otherwise would have been spun out, if not rejected.

The cause of the catastrophe in the Mediterranean in which the *Camperdown*, Admiral Markham's ship, cut the *Victoria* in two has never been thoroughly elicited. Tryon was masterful and he worked all kinds of novel manœuvres in the Mediterranean. He told his captains that they were to obey his signals literally and afterwards he would explain to them why he made them. The signal which he made, his fleet being in two divisions ahead six cables apart, was one by which the two leaders must mathematically come into collision. Markham, the second in command, hesitated to obey the signal, and Tryon signalled: "What are you waiting for?" Markham then obeyed, with unfortunate result. What induced Tryon to make that signal will always be a mystery. At the time of the court-martial it was stated that Maurice Burke, who was his Flag Captain, remonstrated with him but was over-ruled. Markham was censured subsequently by the Board of Admiralty for obeying Tryon's orders; but, in my humble judgment, the decision was a wrong one. However, whatever the cause of the great catastrophe, it resulted in the loss of a big battleship, a most able Commander-in-Chief and a large number of officers and men. Moreover, it shook very much the confidence of the remainder of the Mediterranean Fleet in close manœuvring. The Admiralty took prompt measures to counteract this tendency by sending out another remarkable Admiral, Sir Michael Culme Seymour. He was an exceptionally fine handler of a fleet, and by his pluck, determination and coolness

very soon restored the nerve of the Mediterranean Squadron, and when he retired at the end of his appointment he left it in a high state of efficiency and self-confidence.

There were two distinguished officers junior to those I have just mentioned with whom I had very close personal relations and to both of whom I was in the past greatly indebted for the help which in times of stress and embarrassment they afforded me—Admirals Lord Walter Kerr and Lord Fisher. Although they were the antithesis of one another in character and demeanour, each well represented a certain tone and school of thought of the Navy. Kerr was the embodiment of accuracy, moderation and reliability. During the latter part of his career, when at the top of his profession, his decision or ruling upon any disputed question, either personal, disciplinary or administrative, was accepted without cavil by the whole Service. Cautious in making changes or reforms, he never went back upon his work nor stultified his previous utterance by pyrotechnic capitulations. For five years he was my head Naval Secretary and a rock upon whom to rest. He was as good afloat as he was in Council, a splendid specimen of disinterested loyalty and devotion to the highest demands of duty.

Fisher was a wholly different personality—strong, ambitious and go-ahead, and he made a rare splash in naval and other circles. Right throughout his career he showed instincts of genius, but, like most men so gifted, he was changeable and inconsistent. He was an extraordinary hustler and a marvellous showman. When controlled, he was an invaluable public servant; when uncontrolled, he was apt to be dangerous from his love of the limelight and the

ease with which he became obsessed with the fad of the moment. He was a great humorist and delighted to draw picturesque descriptions of his past work, always adorned with very strong and amusing expletives and Biblical quotations ; but he would be the first to laugh at anyone who appraised him by his own recitals. I knew him as Captain of the *Excellent*, then Director of Naval Ordnance, then Admiral Superintendent of Portsmouth, and finally as Controller of the Navy. All these promotions, which he well deserved, were made whilst I was at the Admiralty, and in these posts he did exceptionally good service. As an old friend and admirer I read with great concern the unfortunate letters which he published during the autumn and winter of 1919-20 headed "Sack and Scrap." These letters are a distortion of his own career and a libel upon the Navy.

Fisher did some very valuable work for the Navy, but he was in no sense an unfailing success. Some of his changes have worked well, some badly ; but in most cases they have been marred by the precipitancy with which they have been forced through. I will give an illustration of success and failure.

Whilst he was Director of Naval Ordnance he became associated with Mr. Vavaseur, of Armstrong's. Vavaseur was a mechanical genius, and between these two our naval ordnance was revolutionised, for whereas in 1884 we were by far the most backward Navy in Europe as regards breech-loading guns, in 1892 we were at least two years ahead of any nation both as regards the quantity and quality of new guns. Fisher may fairly claim the chief share in this extraordinary

feat, but he was during this time working under the supervision of Lord Hood of Avalon.

I now turn to a fiasco which might have been catastrophic, but which was entirely due to precipitate action.

Under the Naval Defence Act there were certain small vessels—torpedo-gunboats they were called—in which some difficulty was experienced in obtaining from cylindrical boilers the designated horse-power. The firm of Thornycroft, which was in my constituency, asked to be allowed to engine and boiler with water-tubes one of these vessels, viz. the *Speedy*, guaranteeing for three years the necessary horse-power. My technical advisers were opposed to this idea, but, with the assent of Hopkins, who was then Controller, I over-ruled them, and the contract was made. The experiment was a complete success. In the meantime I had left the Admiralty, and Fisher became Controller. The displacement of the *Speedy* was about 750 tons. The Belleville boiler was, I believe, tried in the *Sharpsheeler*. Fisher then proceeded to put into the two largest cruisers ever built, viz. the *Terrible* and *Powerful*—twenty times the size of the *Speedy*—this same boiler, and having adopted water-tube boilers of this system and on this scale, he persisted in so boilering all subsequent cruisers in the same way. The pressure per square inch of the water-tube boiler is very much heavier than that of a cylindrical boiler, and every portion of machinery or packing coming in contact with this increased pressure ought to have been previously strengthened and tested by successive experiments. This elementary precaution was ignored, and as a consequence for years to come the steaming incapacity of our cruisers was

a naval byword. Later on, when I was Secretary of State for India, I was on a committee to try to adjust the differences between the Admiralty and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (who was then Beach). The difference arose as regards the dimensions of a new shipbuilding programme. Beach was very obdurate against the Admiralty proposals. Finally, turning to Sir Arthur Wilson, who succeeded Fisher as Controller, he said, "What boilers do you propose to put in these new vessels?" "The same as we now have," replied Wilson. "I am damned if you shall," replied Beach. He was right. A committee was subsequently appointed to report upon naval boilers, and they made various proposals which ought to have been adopted long before. From that day up to now naval boilers have worked well.

Though he had great social gifts, Fisher was too volatile in his judgment and too assertive in his self-advertisement and in his likes and dislikes of others to become the trusted head of a great Service like the Navy. As an administrator and organiser he will rank very high, but he was not equally successful as a reformer. His absorption in the idea of the moment made his grip of the future very fitful. He had, however, such a fund of latent originality and resource and driving power that it was a real pleasure to work with him, and I shall always regard as amongst the most memorable of my experiences my long official association with this remarkable man. He had the good luck to have a most capable and charming wife, whose unfailing sound common sense and judgment largely contributed to the success of his career.

CHAPTER XV

OF all the Admirals connected with the Fleet during my tenure of office he who has made most stir in the world is William Hohenzollern, the ex-Kaiser. I knew a good deal about him before he succeeded to the throne, and I was constantly brought in contact with him afterwards, both officially as First Lord of the Admiralty and from being on more than one occasion in personal attendance upon him. The Queen's elder daughters and some of my sisters were almost identically the same age, and the Queen was very kind in asking my sisters frequently to Buckingham Palace to talk to and play with the princesses of their own age. Thus my sisters came to know the Empress Frederick very well when she was a girl, and that intimacy continued during her lifetime. In consequence, we heard a great deal about the future Emperor when he was a boy and a young man.

The first occasion on which I met him personally was in 1878 at a dinner given by Lord Arthur Russell. He was then an unnoticeable young man except for his curt and brusque manners. Shortly after he succeeded to the throne he came over on a visit to his grandmother in 1889. He was then very much interested in the development of his Navy. To do him justice, it must be said that he had learned his lesson well. *Brassey's Annual* was at that time a semi-official record of naval performances, and he informed me that those *Annuals* were never out of

his room and that he knew them almost by heart. He spent a whole day at Portsmouth examining the various establishments and talking to the officers in charge of them. He created a very favourable impression. He was quick, he had great receptivity and the power of absorbing himself in whatever he was inspecting. I watched him with close interest, because we had heard a good many disquieting rumours as to his real character; but, so far as Portsmouth was concerned, he certainly after that visit left a favourable impression of his personality and ability. Two years later, in 1891, he came over for a second visit. He had in the meantime dismissed Bismarck and endeavoured to get into his own hands the whole power of Prussian autocracy. The deterioration between the man of 1889 and 1891 was remarkable. There was even then nothing natural about him; it was pose, pose, pose, all day long. I was in attendance upon him on that occasion, and he was then trying to unite all in one the rôle of Louis XIV, Frederick the Great and Napoleon. Though he had a certain amount of brusque joviality, he treated his own staff with an utter lack of consideration in the manner in which he spoke to them, the directions which he gave to them and the humiliation inflicted upon them if they did anything which he did not like. He had already developed a reputation for insincerity and untruthfulness. After his second visit Lord Salisbury told me that he looked upon him as the most dangerous enemy we had in Europe. He also added that he had never met a man with such a doubletongue.

On each succeeding occasion when I met him he seemed to have deteriorated more and more in character and morality—so much so that one can

almost trace the continuous inroads which his incredible pretensions and vanity made, not only upon his judgment and sense of proportion, but even upon his sanity. This process continued until there was not a particle of sincerity, truth or reliability left in his whole composition; but he still retained a certain ability. He had receptivity, considerable power of expression, great capacity for work and an intense love of interfering with everybody and everything; but, with the exception of his naval work, he was thorough in nothing.

As our relations with the German Navy at that time were friendly, it was thought advisable to make him an Admiral of the Fleet. The moment he got that honour he took upon himself to attempt to influence the movements of our Fleet and to direct our policy. Time after time, through the Foreign Office, I used to receive at the Admiralty messages from Berlin. Every such message or every such suggestion was always framed with a view to bringing us, if possible, into collision with the French. I had a very able staff, and at the Admiralty we knew naturally a great deal more about naval affairs than the Emperor, so we quietly put on one side his suggestions. He complained to Salisbury that he was not accustomed to receive the Parliamentary answers that he got from the British Admiralty. He was constantly warning the Admiralty that Armstrong's steel was bad and suggesting that we should go to Krupp's. We subsequently found out that he had a large pecuniary interest in that institution. On another occasion he sent a message as to the improper disposition of our Fleet in the Mediterranean, and the suggestion he made was one which, whilst strategically wrong, must have had

the effect of annoying the French. I think the last message that I received from Berlin was in connection with an imaginary coup-de-main which the Prussian Foreign Office pretended France wished to make upon Spezzia. At this particular moment the relations between Italy and France were much strained. There was commercial and industrial war going on between the two countries. Berlin informed the British Admiralty that they had certain evidence that the French were about to attempt a coup-de-main at Spezzia by landing there two army corps, that if this occurred the peace of Europe would be endangered and a general European war provoked, and that in the interests of peace it was therefore advisable that the British Navy should stop this movement. The procedure suggested to us for nipping this movement in the bud was to order the British Fleet up to Toulon and then to threaten it with bombardment. I may add that the Duke of Edinburgh, the Queen's second son, was at that time in command of the Mediterranean Fleet. We had at the Admiralty means of gaining accurate information on any big movement of French transports in the Mediterranean. We therefore ignored this insidious suggestion. Moreover, the lie of the Bay of Toulon and the location of the forts made bombardment impossible with the naval guns of that date.

To show how German history is written, I will just quote an extract from the memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe, who for some time was Chancellor of the German Empire :

“ A Franco-Russian intrigue has been set on foot, by which Spezzia was to be, or still is to be, seized by France. This would lead to war with Italy, and

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in the meanwhile we should be busied with Russia. This war between France and Italy would be extended so as to give back to the Pope a part of his temporal power. If it then came to a war of the French Republic intervening on behalf of the Pope, Austria would be unwilling to enter the field for Italy and against the Pope, and the German Catholics would also not take part in the war with enthusiasm. Russia counts on this, and France seems to agree with her. England is said to have ordered the Duke of Edinburgh to bombard Toulon in case France took Spezzia. On this the scheme seems to have gone to pieces." (Vol. II, page 386.)

Neither Salisbury nor I for a moment believed that there was any truth in the allegation here made ; but it will be observed that Hohenlohe states that England ordered the Duke of Edinburgh to bombard Toulon in certain eventualities. That is what the German Government *wished* us to do, but what the English Admiralty declined to do. If we had been fools enough to adopt the German suggestion, we should have had war with France, and I have not the slightest doubt that subsequent investigation would have shown that the story of France preparing to take Spezzia was a pure German falsehood.

About this time proposals were made to us by Germany that we should obtain certain concessions with the approval of the German Government in Zanzibar and the Hinterland behind it, provided we gave up Heligoland ; and, after a very full investigation by the Admiralty into the advantages and disadvantages of the retention of Heligoland, the Admiralty agreed to its cession to Germany. If subsequent events have shown this to have been a wrong move, I must bear the main responsibility for it.

Heligoland has figured prominently in naval operations during the whole of the past war, and its conversion by Germany into an almost impregnable fortress has naturally induced people to think that the policy was short-sighted which handed over this island to Germany. But the other side of this question has to be considered. It is quite clear that if we had retained Heligoland, the House of Commons would never have assented to its being sufficiently fortified to be self-defending. It is true that it is a good roadstead, and, in fact, the only anchorage from which Kiel Canal can be blockaded, but submarines and torpedo-destroyers have made impossible the form of blockade which alone can be carried on from the Heligoland roadstead. An advanced naval base or position which cannot protect itself by its own fortifications must either fall into the hands of the enemy or be protected by naval power ; but the disposition of the naval forces necessary to protect it may be fatal to the general strategy of the war. To have kept any large portion of our fleet in the immediate neighbourhood of Heligoland would, in the existing circumstances of 1914 to 1918, have been to invite naval disaster. Heligoland, therefore, must fall into the hands of the Germans unless we had first so defeated the German Navy as to make it impossible for any considerable portion of it to emerge from its protected bases.

Very early in my Admiralty experience I had a good illustration of the futility of an advanced and defenceless naval post. We seized Port Hamilton when we were on the verge of war with Russia. It was an island the possession of which on the map seemed to offer special naval advantages ; but we could not fortify it, and three successive Commanders-

in-Chief at Hong Kong agreed that its retention was a serious incumbrance to the free movement of our sea-going fleet in those waters. We therefore gave it up. It may be urged that if we had not given up Heligoland to Germany in 1891, that island would not have been fortified, and that our long-range guns could have blown the island to pieces. That is perfectly true, but I doubt, even if we had accomplished that comparatively easy feat, if it would have had much effect on the ultimate naval issues in this war.

Looking back now, with all our recent knowledge, I think we were justified in 1891 in dispossessing ourselves of this untenable advanced naval post. But in giving it up to Germany we not only made a great concession to that country, but we also gave the strongest evidence of our belief in the reality of the friendship which Germany then professed towards this country. Whether it was due to direct action of the Kaiser, or to a change in the personnel of the Berlin Foreign Office, or whether it was accidental, the fact remains that from the moment we gave up Heligoland, the whole tone of the German Government changed. It became aggressive, hostile and insincere, and from that time up to now I cannot recollect a single instance in which Germany has behaved to us with either the courtesy or consideration which we undoubtedly received from other big countries in our international dealings.

Some years subsequent to the date of the period upon which I am writing I saw a good deal of Sir Horace Rumbold, our Ambassador at Vienna. He had a personal claim against an Indian Prince which he wished to discuss with me at the India Office. Sir Horace could speak with exceptional authority

upon the internal condition of Germany and the movements and agencies then in operation to shape and promote German aspirations and policy. He warned me that the hostility against England was steadily on the increase, and he so impressed this danger upon me that I asked him one day to be allowed to take him through the various classes of society in order to ascertain what was the origin of this almost universal antipathy against Great Britain. I took first the governing class, that is to say, those who were in civil authority, those who regulated the Army and Navy, and those who had influence in Court circles. As regards this stratum of society, he informed me that the feeling was universal that England was the nursery and home of political constitutional heresies, and that the doctrines which were preached and promulgated by English Governments and English Parliaments were the reverse of what they believed to be essential for the good government of a great nation. In other words, autocracy in its most undiluted form came directly into antagonism with the freer ideas of the democratic constitution.

We then came to the commercial and middle classes. The magnates of the commercial class were in competition with England and were anxious, if possible, to oust her from her previous position of superiority; but amongst the commercial and middle classes there was great resentment against England, particularly against *Punch*. Germany had suddenly sprung into wealth, and she had all the sensitiveness of the *parvenu*. The pictures in *Punch* of fat Germans smoking big pipes and drinking large pots of beer infuriated this class which had suddenly come into opulence and luxury, and he assured me,

though it sounded incredible, that this feeling of resentment did to a large extent permeate and mould their political views.

He then went on to the working classes. They were less unfriendly than the two classes above; but they, too, were in direct industrial competition with England, and they were naturally largely influenced by their Press and what was taught them in their educational system.

Sir Horace then ended by saying: "I now come to the really dangerous enemies of my country, viz. the teaching class of Germany." And he declared—and subsequent investigation has confirmed his statement—that in the teaching class of Germany, from those at the head of the biggest universities down to the assistant masters of the elementary schools, all throughout were imbued with hostility towards England. The higher-class professor represented the English people as a decadent and played-out race, the British Empire was described as one created by fraud and chicanery, and it was further alleged that the jealousy of the English people was such that they would, so far as they possibly could, prevent Germany from having her fair share of the commerce of the world or, in fact, her legitimate place in the sun. I asked him what was the system of selection and promotion in the teaching services, and he assured me that they were practically all under the control of the Government, and he added that the Kaiser took great interest in watching over the appointment and promotion of teachers and professors, and that, so far as he knew, his influence was always thrown in the direction of those who were most irreconcilable against England.

These statements of Sir Horace Rumbold made a

great impression upon me. He was one of the most accomplished linguists that ever entered our Diplomatic Service ; he could talk both French and German like a native ; he had been living in Germany so long and in such different situations that he had an almost unrivalled knowledge of her institutions, the habits of the different classes of society and of her life, aims and objects. At the time he made that statement to me, although there were incipient developments of this hostility, those of us who were in office believed this antipathy to England was talk rather than business.

For more than a quarter of a century the ex-Kaiser ruled over Germany. It is now quite clear that during the latter part of this reign he was unceasing in his endeavours to stir up bad feeling against England. Whenever he wanted an addition to his fleet, that demand was always heralded by a violent newspaper outbreak against the British nation and its policy ; and whilst, on the one hand, he did all he could to encourage hostility to his mother's country, he was during the whole of that period in affectionate correspondence with his royal relatives and pretending to be their friend and ally. There was an indescribable perfidy running through the whole of the latter part of his career. He was constantly starting movements and agitations the effect and consequences of which he did not foresee. All he cared about was to be able to strike an effective theatrical pose for the moment. What happened afterwards was of minor consequence.

To illustrate the depth of meanness and treachery to which the German Government had recourse in their machinations against England, I need merely recite the action which they took in China, when we,

at their request, undertook to co-operate with them for the purpose of obtaining a permanent and satisfactory settlement of the differences between China and the big Powers of the world.

In these operations each nation undertook, with the assent of the others, to occupy temporarily certain parts of China, and, as part of the understanding, we sent a force to Shanghai. In negotiating with China we suddenly experienced a note of resentment on the part of the Chinese officials. There was evidently something wrong, and after investigation we ascertained that the German Consul-General had deliberately informed the Chinese Government that the British intended permanently to occupy Shanghai and had no intention of adhering to their word to vacate it when peace was made. The action of the Consul-General at Shanghai was known to and approved by the German Government. The Government here was very indignant, and Lord Lansdowne, who was Foreign Secretary, wrote to the German Government the stiffest despatch I have ever read, openly accusing their officials of falsehood and circulating untrue statements for the purpose of prejudicing the Chinese against the English good faith. A few days after this despatch was sent, the Kaiser announced his intention of visiting England. He went to Sandringham, and Lansdowne was one of the visitors who was commanded to meet him. I said to Lansdowne, "You will not have a very pleasant visit." "No," he said; "I am not looking forward to it." The Kaiser came; he had some conversations with Lansdowne, but he never once alluded to this transaction. In the circumstances he should have done one of two things. He either should have attempted to vindicate the action of his subordinates,

or he should have apologised or withdrawn the false statements which the subordinate had circulated. The Kaiser did neither one nor the other, though he knew perfectly well that his Government had been detected in conduct which was outside the limit of diplomatic decency.

Sir Spencer Wilkinson last year (1920) alluded to this incident as follows in the *Sunday Times* :

“ Count Bernstorff on one occasion asked me to meet Count Metternich at dinner in order to discuss the tension of feeling between the two countries. Count Metternich put to me the question, ‘ Do you think there is any prospect of an end to the feeling of estrangement towards Germany ? ’ ‘ It will not begin to end,’ I replied, ‘ until there is in Germany a Government or a statesman whose word the British Government can believe.’

Count Metternich was, of course, indignant at what he was bound to take as an insult, and said, with the dignity of an offended magnate and the irritation of a startled Ambassador, ‘ What do you mean ? ’ I replied simply, ‘ What about Shanghai ? ’ Whereupon the Ambassador’s wrath subsided, and he said plaintively, ‘ Ah ! that was a great mistake. I was always against it,’ thus giving away the truth that the breach of faith, so far from being the work of the German representative in China, had been fully discussed beforehand at Berlin.”

It is not necessary for me to follow up or to gauge the continuous course of deceit and treachery which the Kaiser practised against this country in the interval between the time of which I am writing and the outbreak of war in 1914. The veil is gradually being lifted, and the world at large is getting a better insight into the character of the ex-Kaiser. Whether he is at all times responsible for his actions

may be open to doubt ; but, putting that consideration on one side, his career is a unique combination of bluster, insincerity and ineptitude. Other monarchs before him by their action and policy have involved their people in disaster, and other sovereigns have had to face internal revolution to which they have succumbed ; but there is no record in history of any sovereign deliberately entangling his people in a huge war and then running away to another country to save his own skin ; nor is there any parallel to the rapidity and completeness of the revolution which he provoked in his own country. The Government, the Army, the bureaucracy of Germany at the commencement of the war were the best organised and most loyal of any in the world. It was the infirmity of purpose of the Kaiser that irretrievably wrecked these superlative institutions. He was a mountebank from the first, and the stern realities of war have indelibly stamped this hall-mark upon him. In peace manœuvres he loved to gallop on a white horse flourishing a sword at the head of thousands of cavalry ; but he showed no tendency to be at the forefront of battle when high-explosives, bullets and gas had to be encountered. Right up to the very end of the war he strutted about as the "All-Highest" and "Great War Lord" and impressed upon his soldiers and people the necessity of shedding their last drop of blood on behalf of himself and his aims ; but when he had to face danger in Berlin he bolted in the middle of the night to Army Headquarters, and, finding that location not free from risk, he precipitately abdicated and sought safety in a neutral country.

CHAPTER XVI

THE close of the last session left Balfour in a triumphant position. He had been most severely tested, and he emerged from the ordeal with a success which his most enthusiastic admirers could not have anticipated. It was one thing to have worsted the Irish revolutionaries and English Radicals in debate. He had obtained the exceptional powers for which he wished ; he had amended in a liberal and broad spirit the existing Land Acts in Ireland. Would he, with these two weapons in his possession, be able to check and counteract the agitation founded on outrage and murder which dominated so large a portion of Ireland ? Would he be as successful in his acts as he had been in his talk ? He had an able staff at Dublin, and by the end of the year they had in combination so asserted themselves that disorder and lawlessness were gradually diminishing. Although the Home Rulers had recourse to their usual tactics of gross personal abuse and misrepresentation of the motives of their leading opponent, Balfour was absolutely impervious to this class of attack, and he ignored them in a most practical way by not reading the newspapers in which they appeared, unless he was compelled to do so for purposes of debate.

Balfour is one of the few English officials who, when in Ireland, appraised at their proper value the expletives of the Irish politicians, which, after all, are only a reflection of the natural tendency of Irish-

men to indulge in violent language on the smallest provocation. It means little or nothing, and no one in Ireland dreams of taking these verbal expressions at their face value. The prosaic Saxon, especially if he is in the House of Commons, puts the same estimate upon the Irish vocabulary as he would upon his own. He cannot imagine or grasp the astounding power of exaggeration and mis-statement which runs behind the ordinary utterances of Irishmen in politics ; nor can he understand how, when anyone indulges in such language, he can five minutes afterwards be hobnobbing with the very person whom he had so vituperated and insulted. A few years back I had a good illustration of this tendency.

I was asked to preside over a panel of Irish private Bills. It was anticipated that there would be some excitement and strong language used in connection with them, and those in conduct of private business thought that, as I was Irish, I might be able to get these Bills through with less ruction than one who was not accustomed to Irish rhodomontade. I reluctantly accepted the post. The first Bill that came up was one connected with the water-supply of Queenstown. A large spring of the very best water was in the possession of a private company mainly composed of Protestants. The Town Council, who were anxious to acquire this spring, was composed of advanced Nationalists. The inevitable religious difficulty and antagonism were thus introduced into this water question. Upon the Committee was a very well-known Nationalist member, Mr. A. M. Sullivan, an excellent fellow, gifted with rare powers of speech, but very emotional. The Secretary of the Water Company, who was an Orangeman, described to us the ordeal to which he had been subjected by

threatening letters and otherwise, and he addressed all his remarks to A. M. Sullivan as though he had been the author and instigator of these attacks. The case evidently was one for compromise, and after it had proceeded a little while I suggested that they might retire and see if they could not agree. They retired, and after a short time the Counsel on both sides said that they had come to a settlement, and they would put the Secretary of the Water Company into the box to confirm the arrangement which had been made. The Secretary then gave the necessary evidence, and this concluded the case. But he then turned round to me, and said, "Me Lord, may I say a word?" "Yes," I said, "if you won't take long about it." "I wish to say this to this honourable Committee. My life had been in great danger over this matter. Many is the threatening letter that I have received, but I don't mind that; but the mean assassin who sent them [pointing to A. M. Sullivan] forgot to stamp them, and I had to pay twopence for each." As may be imagined, a noisy row ensued, which ended in an ample apology being made to the "mean assassin." But when the Committee was up, I found in the lobby and engaged in a most friendly and hearty conversation the "mean assassin" and the receiver of threatening letters.

George Trevelyan, who had had an unfortunate experience as Irish Secretary, had been one of the most prominent and violent of the Liberal Unionists. He was especially strong in his denunciation of Spencer for following Gladstone in his *volte face* upon Home Rule. Trevelyan had very brilliant literary gifts, but for political work he was not equally qualified, and there were soon indications that he was prepared to wobble on the Home Rule question.

The Eighty Club, which had been established to commemorate Gladstone's great electioneering victory in that year, was the centre of animated discussion. Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice and Trevelyan, a former Irish Secretary, both being at that time Unionists, agreed to raise a discussion at one of the meetings of this Club. To Trevelyan was allotted one part of the speech, to Fitzmaurice another, and each had reported to the other the line and tone of argument which he proposed to adopt. In the middle of Trevelyan's speech Fitzmaurice was surprised to hear a sentence to the effect that the game of law and order in Ireland was up. Walking home with Trevelyan after dinner, he said to him, "Why did you not let me know that you were going to make that statement?" Trevelyan replied that he did not think it was material. Very shortly afterwards Trevelyan ratted on his previous opinion and became a full-blown and unbenign supporter of Home Rule. This change of opinion was naturally a source of great delight to the Nationalist members, who, on the Address and according to their practice, proceeded to eulogise Trevelyan in extravagant terms both as a man and a politician.

In this debate upon the Address allusion was made to and a half-apology tendered to Balfour for the outrageous abuse which had been heaped upon him by the Nationalist Press. Balfour, in reply, said that he did not consider, according to Irish standards, that the language applied to him had been violent. It is true that he had been described as one "who hunted for slaughter with a eunuchised imagination," but that, after all, was a compliment compared to the description they had given of their present idol, Sir George Trevelyan, in which it was stated that

“if Nature had denied to Trevelyan the resources of the skunk and the cuttle-fish, she had enabled him to supply their place.” Balfour’s utter indifference to the personalities which had driven Trevelyan almost into hysterics deprived the Nationalists of their most effective Parliamentary weapon.

The Address was carried by a large majority—317 to 229—and 50 Liberal Unionists voted with the majority. Balfour’s double success, his dominance in the House of Commons and the steady reassertion of law and authority in Ireland, seemed to madden Gladstone. It was noted at that time that as the fight became hotter it was Parnell who became cooler and more moderate, and it was the elderly statesman who had been three times Prime Minister who became more violent and extravagant in temper and language.

During this session the Government introduced a Land Bill. Gladstone opposed it, Parnell approved of it in principle, but with reservations. The plan of campaign which had recently been started was condemned by the Pope. Parnell was entertained at the Eighty Club, and he there admitted that, in his judgment, the plan of campaign was an error, but was unavoidable; but Gladstone never said a word of condemnation. On the contrary, his speeches seemed to indicate that he was ready to take any temporary advantage which the starting and spread of this conspiracy could give to him politically.

During this year certain Irish magistrates inflicted cumulative sentences upon prisoners who were brought before them. Gladstone denounced these as a “trick of the meanest kind, the dishonour and discredit of which I will not attempt to divide

between Government and the authorities in Ireland." He assumed that the power of enforcing cumulative sentences was conferred by the Coercion Act of the preceding year, which he had opposed, but it was contained in earlier Acts, and cumulative sentences had constantly been imposed during the time he was in power. Balfour very promptly brought out this fact, but we had no apology or retractation from Gladstone.

There was a very able but somewhat scatterbrained professor, Stuart by name, in the House of Commons who was a very sincere admirer of Gladstone, but he was, though a man of considerable attainments, also a *gobe-mouche*. He supplied Gladstone with some amazing stories in connection with transactions upon Lord Leitrim's estate of which Gladstone promptly made use, but which subsequently proved to be grossly inaccurate. The knowledge that he had supplied this information was well known, and after one of Gladstone's violent speeches in the House of Commons, Colonel Saunderson, who was the wittiest and, I think, the ablest speaker amongst the Irish Unionists, jumped up and opened his speech by pointing to Stuart and saying, "Has the Professor again been on the warpath?"

During this period Gladstone was so obsessed by his Irish policy that there was nothing too good for those Irishmen with whom he was co-operating and nothing too bad for those who were opposed to him. The Act of Union was described as an "Act of almost unparalleled blackguardism and corruption." Gladstone did not take the trouble to ascertain, which he might have done, that one-third of the sums paid to the Irish Parliament for the abolition of the Irish representation went into the pockets of those who

were opposed to the Union. The money was paid, not as a bribe, but as compensation, which I quite admit is an altogether wrong principle, but one which certainly did not justify the language which Gladstone used in connection with it.

Gladstone dined out one night at a small dinner-party, and Lowell, the well-known American minister and wit, was one of the company. Speaking about Ireland, Gladstone asserted that those high, narrow, small towers, one of which can be found near Naas and the origin and use of which have much puzzled archæologists, are some of the oldest and most astounding historical monuments known. This was too much for Lowell, who mildly suggested that there were such things as the Pyramids. His remark annoyed Gladstone, and he turned upon Lowell and said, "When did you come back from America?" "I left New York about ten days ago," replied Lowell. "Can you tell me," said Gladstone, "why New York is the worst-governed city in America?" "Yes, I can; but you would not like the answer." "What is it?" "That the Irish have got control of it through Tammany Hall." Gladstone was so angry that he declined to have any further conversation with Lowell during the dinner.

I mention these facts, not to disparage the memory of a very remarkable man, but to give some idea of the exceptional difficulties which those who were opposed to his Irish policy had to encounter from his language and demeanour, and how that the older he became the more determined he seemed to be in his ubiquitous oratory to dissociate himself from those habits of restraint and moderation of language which usually are associated with advancing years

and with a public man of his exceptional standing and reputation.

At the end of the session, Gladstone, in combination with Parnell, made continuous attacks upon the Irish Estimates. Balfour defended himself with extraordinary ability, and at the close he had established his reputation not only as a debater but as an administrator ; also, I think it is no exaggeration to say that he became in the minds of the great mass of the English people the most prominent figure in Parliament.

Though Irish matters occupied the greater part of this session, we passed a big Local Government Bill, which Ritchie handled with great skill, and Goschen also brought in a Bill for the conversion of Consols into a lower rate of interest. But whilst the Government's position inside the House of Commons became stronger and stronger, outside we lost seats continuously ; in fact, our position ultimately became somewhat precarious, although we had good luck to retain by small majorities the seats of Doncaster and Deptford. Mr. (now Mr. Justice) Darling was our candidate for the latter place, and I have no doubt it was his wit, imagination and power of speech which in that somewhat prosaic place secured for us that victory.

Beach also returned to the House of Commons, his sight greatly improved, and very shortly afterwards he became President of the Board of Trade. He could only read with difficulty, but his concentrated memory enabled him to carry on the work of his office efficiently. His sight steadily improved, and in the course of the next two or three years became almost normal. I hardly know of any case where a man of first-class ability was so prostrated

by partial blindness and ill-health, and yet by the aid of fresh treatment and a good constitution was so rehabilitated as to be able for many years afterwards to take a leading part in the public life of the country.

These two small victories at Doncaster and Deptford had a steadying effect upon the electorate and rallied the spirits and fighting power of our party. At the time I calculated that, though the majorities in each case were under 300, these elections each added an effective year to the life of our Government.

In times of stress and emergency, incidents little in themselves do subsequently influence big issues to a surprising degree, and this phenomenon is applicable to war as well as to peace time. Cause and effect can never be correlated. Over and over again in some of the Titanic battles of the Great War of 1914-18 the turning-point leading to victory was a comparatively small success little in its dimensions but so woven locally, psychologically or chronologically into some much bigger movement as just to give it the necessary volition at the critical moment of balance between defeat and victory. Politics and war are governed and regulated by much the same principles and qualities. What brings success in the one is almost sure to stave off defeat in the other.

CHAPTER XVII

EARLY in the year 1888 the Emperor William died. The removal of this great monarchical pillar from the scene of his successive triumphs and the gap thus caused in the whole Royal system of Europe would, under any conditions, have created a stir; but his death occurred at a critical moment in the conflict between autocracy and constitutionalism in Germany. His eldest son and successor was known to hold strong views as to the necessity of modifying, by the infusion of popular ideas and principles, the existing iron system of bureaucracy in Germany. In the past he and his illustrious consort had thrown themselves almost across Bismarck's path in their endeavours to promote such changes; but that omnipotent Minister had summarily swept on one side all such ideas and efforts, and he treated with his remorseless vindictiveness the lesser confederates in these movements. Now that supreme legal authority was about to descend upon his old antagonists and they were to become his Imperial and Royal Masters, would he accept a position of less omnipotence, or would he rally against a constitutional monarch those national elements and forces which he had by his success and character made his own? The first question started was—could the Crown Prince succeed if he was suffering from a mortal and incurable disease? The Prussian Constitution was supposed to veto such a succession. That the

Crown Prince was seriously ill was undeniable, but was his disease fatal? Over this point there was a very unseemly medical squabble—whether the Crown Prince's illness was such as to make it certain that his death would be in the immediate future, or whether a dispute of this kind carried with it too much discredit and obloquy. At any rate, it was not pressed, and the Crown Prince succeeded his father as Emperor early in the year. He died a few months later, and with his death all hope of the immediate subordination of militarism and bureaucracy to popular influence and control vanished.

There was an excellent *Life of the Empress Frederick* written some time back. It was very sad reading. Seldom has any woman been so gifted both intellectually and morally; her courage and endurance were superlatively high, but all her political instincts and education were associated with the institutions and habits of her native country rather than with those she found in force in Germany, and she had the misfortune, in the prosecution of her ideas, to come across the biggest man of the century, who was ruthless in his methods and dislikes. With all his brutality he could appreciate and utilise the good qualities of an antagonist, but he never made any overtures to nor did he ever forgive the Crown Prince and his consort for their opposition to him when, in his earlier career as Minister, he was fighting for existence.

The Crown Princess, with her indomitable courage, receptivity, powers of work and high intellectual attainments, was almost as remarkable a personality as Bismarck. What an ally and help she could have been to him in the attainment of his higher ideals of national life and character if they could ever in

any way have worked together! What a moderating and liberal force she would have become in German politics, and how different now would be the history and outlook both of Germany and Europe! That these two great people might have combined their forces in certain spheres of action may seem now a fantastic phantasy; but the idea floated through my mind one year whilst I was in attendance upon Queen Victoria at Balmoral. The Empress was on a visit to her mother, and for at least a week I sat next her at dinner. She was a wonderful conversationalist, full of ideas—past, present and future—thoroughly well up in modern literature, science, art and politics, and gifted with rare powers of expression and a charming voice; but if ever we entered upon any controversial subject, there was a vibrant assertiveness in her lovely voice which made one realise that she was a tenacious fighter and not easily moved from her path when once it was selected.

During this week I was reading Busch's *Life of Bismarck*, which had just come out, and the simultaneous contact—one, it is true, only on paper, and the other in person—with these two great personalities made their antagonism and lifelong duel a melancholy reflection. The Empress, from the day she landed in Germany, seems to have been located in a disloyal and depreciative atmosphere. Nothing she did was right or commendable, and though at times she may have been too uncompromising in her attitude, now that we know more of German mentality we can understand and realise the odious environment with which she was encircled and the delight with which it would snub and thwart the ideas of an English Princess. Yet there was one idea in common between the two—the need of civil control over

militarism. In her it was uppermost and outspoken; in him it was latent and the product of his later experience. His original policy was "blood and iron," for it was by these means alone that he could smash the protocolic supremacy of Austria and the military dominance of France; but, these two great objects being accomplished, he became more and more conscious of the danger of letting loose the aspirations of the German military caste. A close perusal of his Life shows how constant was his fight and attempted control of militarism. In the peace he made with Austria he beat the military party; in the peace with France they beat him, and, contrary to his judgment, the annexation of Lorraine was insisted upon. In 1875, and not infrequently in later years, he stopped war; and when he was suddenly ousted from office by William Hohenzollern, he foresaw that this braggart young man would be quite unequal to the task of keeping the military power under control. Internal consolidation rather than external and colonial expansion was his goal. Permanent peace at home and not constant war abroad was the foundation of his later policy. What a cordial and capable ally he would have found in the Empress in the enforcement of such principles! Both are now gone, and the world is strewn with the wreckage of civilisation. German militarism is gone, and though it may revive, never again will it assume its old omnipotence, for it will be connected with if not controlled by political and popular authority.

Of the two it may fairly be said it is the Empress's ideas rather than those of Bismarck which will dominate the future, for it is by their admission and adoption alone that the permanent peace of the world can be secured. How different would

the world be and what a superhuman load of misery, destruction and desolation should we have been spared if this truth could have been recognised only a few years back!

Bismarck's retirement into private life was associated with an incident more grotesque than tragic. An intimate and distinguished associate of both the Kaiser and Bismarck gave me their versions of the final scene. "In the room where we met there was a table between us," said the Kaiser, "and on it was a solid and heavy inkstand. So beside himself with fury was the Prince that I had to keep my eye on that inkstand for fear it should be thrown at the head of his Sovereign." Bismarck's account was that the Kaiser "worked himself up into such a state of uncontrollable rage that I had carefully to watch the inkstand on the table between us. If the interview had lasted much longer I should have been bespattered with its contents."

CHAPTER XVIII

AFTER Balfour had established his supremacy over the Irish members in debate, the record of the proceedings of the House of Commons for the next four years is somewhat monotonous. It was one continuous conflict between the Government, as represented by Balfour (and occasionally assisted by Goschen and the Home Secretary, Mr. Matthews), against the combined forces of the Opposition, headed by Gladstone and Parnell. Balfour throughout held his own with ease. There were scenes of considerable disorder and at times almost of violence. They afforded "copy" for the journalists at the time they occurred, but they are not of much interest to the historical student of to-day. But it was not in the House of Commons alone that Gladstone was active. He showed a most astounding vitality and vigour in his performances on the platform. Someone in conversation with Granville expressed intense admiration for Gladstone's mental gifts. Granville replied, "It is his body rather than his mind that I envy." Gladstone was then in his seventy-ninth year, but during the Whitsuntide holidays of 1889 he made one if not two speeches a day for a whole fortnight, and each successive speech outdid its predecessor in exaggeration and violence. Balfour waited for him until he had finished his tour, and he then replied at Portsmouth. His reply is such a masterpiece of effective satire that I quote verbatim a long passage from it.

"I should like," he said, "to give lectures teaching any aspirant to fame how to become a Separatist agitator. I have made a careful study of the whole subject, and I have seen a good deal of it. A good many of the arts have been practised upon myself, and I think that I know as much about the subject as anybody. I should say, in the first place, to such a person, "Never argue, because an argument can be answered. Never develop your plan for Home Rule, because painful experience has shown that no plan of Home Rule has ever yet been devised by the most ingenious brain which could not be knocked to pieces in twenty minutes by the least expert of political pugilists. Starve your memory—it is a most inconvenient gift; and cultivate your imagination, for it is the most valuable of all qualities. When you are speaking in England and to an English audience, melt them into tears by a picture of the woes and poverty of the Irish tenant. When you are in Ireland, do all you can to destroy the confidence which is the only basis of industrial development. . . .

When you are in England, talk about the union of hearts; but when you are in Ireland, praise the memory of the rebels of 1798, or the rebels of 1848, or the rebels of 1868, or of the Manchester murderers. When you are in England, discourse on the brutality of landlords who turn out their tenants and on the hardness of agents who will not give an abatement of rent. When you are in Ireland, take care that no offer, however reasonable, shall be accepted by any tenant. Turn them out of their holdings, compel them to adopt the plan of campaign, deprive them by your procedure of the whole of the improvements they have made on their farms, and then support them in pauperism and poverty out of the funds of the Land League. Invent for yourself, if you have sufficient ingenuity, or if that be too much trouble take from the pages of *United Ireland*

any number of falsehoods and fictions with regard to the action of the Government and police in that country. Lavish imaginary tales about little girls and old women who are put in prison, about old men who are knocked down for intimidating the police, about persons who are put in prison for cheering Mr. Gladstone or booing Mr. Balfour. When one lie has been exposed, go to another; when one story has been utterly exposed, there is nothing to prevent your exercising the same great gift in the creation of a new one. When it has been conclusively proved that Mr. Mandeville was not murdered by the Chief Secretary, then make out that Mr. O'Brien is being murdered by the Chief Secretary. When it has been shown that Mr. O'Brien on his own testimony and the sworn testimony of everybody concerned has not been treated with more force than was absolutely necessary to carry out the rules of the prison, make no apology, do not allude to the question, but invent some new fiction which will be equally attractive. Then when you have done all this, and when you have learned the art of seasoning the whole dish with a kind of sickly sentimentality as far removed from true humanity as the north is from the south, then you will be qualified to join the great band of Separatist orators, and to shatter the Constitution in the name of freedom, and to destroy the law in the name of liberty."

In the middle of this year Bright died. He had long been ill, and the only political sign of existence which he gave during his illness was the publication of occasional letters, generally upon Home Rule. They were characterised right up to the end of his life by the terse and caustic language of which he was so pre-eminently a master. In the days of his power and plenitude of speech he was not an agree-

able opponent: he could be intensely unfair; but in his defence it must be alleged that he never pretended to put any part of the case of the institution or of the individual he was attacking. His business, he said, was to make a permanent and effective attack; let the friends of the institution or individual attacked defend themselves as best they could and say what they liked. He was in consequence not infrequently involved in acrimonious personal controversy; but it was not in his nature either to retract or to apologise for what he had once said. The only person who did obtain from him something approaching an apology was the celebrated orator Archbishop Magee, in a controversy over the Burials Bill. The correspondence is contained in Magee's Life, written by his son, and it is worth reading. Both were hard hitters, both masters of their native tongue, but each evidently had for the other a latent admiration which softened and elevated the whole tone of their communications. No man ever more justly deserved the epithet of "honest" than John Bright, and to his honesty may be added a love of conflict and undying loyalty to his class and environment. If he had been born a squire, he would have been an agrarian Cromwell—hard, just, but an autocrat to the backbone. It was his surroundings and early training and sect which alone made him a Pacifist and cosmopolitan trader; but even then he denounced all who opposed his views in a true spirit of militarist ferocity. Unlike his eloquent contemporary, he was not gifted with a superfluity of speech. Though an active agitator in his early life, for the last twenty years of his career he spoke rarely. He was, I think, by nature

indolent, and a mere love of work and talk had for him little attraction; but he never lost his influence or the penetrating effect of his massive and concentrated eloquence.

It cannot be denied that Gladstone's tactics, however detrimental they might be to his reputation as a thinker and statesman, did not pay in their immediate results. The Government did lose by elections, and to that extent the Opposition benefited and the Government were embarrassed; but success so attained carried with it penalties, and the worst of them did not make their effect felt in the near future, but they showed themselves in the ultimate and steady declension of the standard of Parliamentary efficiency.

The House of Commons, according to our Constitution, is not a mere debating or even a mere legislative machine. Talk is not its first or final function. It has to administer, govern, foresee, and above all, it must have time to think. The Empire it dominates is unique in its vastness and variety. On no Parliament is there so large and varied a sphere of responsible duty and action imposed as that which comes within the purview of the House of Commons. To Gladstone it was a relaxation rather than a task to speak upon the platform. He was so constituted that he could without difficulty have made a speech every day in the year which, from his extraordinary combination of oratorical gifts, would have attracted large and enthusiastic audiences. His range of general knowledge was such that the speeches so made would have passed muster with the general public, though possibly not with the experts of the subjects upon which he spoke. His political status was so pre-

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eminent, his intellectual gifts so universally acknowledged, that what he did became a *fashion and duty* to a large section of the political world. In the last stages of his political career he raised, not so much the standard of public speaking, as the expectation and requirements of the constituencies as to the quantity of talk their representative should give them, and this obligation still holds good, and it is one which has imposed itself more or less upon all aspirants for public distinction. To be perpetually talking is an ordeal to which few Englishmen, however talented, care to subject themselves. The physical strain, the absorption of time necessitated by the travelling to and fro, are beyond the average human endurance unless a man is preparing to convert himself into a mere dictaphone. Men of capacity, who like to weigh in advance the balance of their words and who are reluctant to commit themselves suddenly to any unthought-out solution of a difficult problem, were hopelessly handicapped in the new test imposed upon them. Democracy no doubt has the merit of laying the foundations of authority upon a broader and less hazardous basis than a constitution of more limited dimensions; but all democracies have difficulty in obtaining through popular election effective and capable governors. The ordeal which Gladstone inaugurated of constant and perpetual talk has scared away from political life capable and conscientious men who will not subordinate their whole being to stump oratory. The unquestioned declension in recent years of the House of Commons is largely due to the practical exclusion from public life of that class of man whose powers of action and administration are in excess of their facility of talk and who, whilst

ready to make politics their primary job, are not prepared to spend their whole lives upon the platform. This evil became very apparent during the recent war. As soon as it became necessary for the State to take over and administer certain functions in relation to trade, commerce and transport which before the war were outside the sphere of public control, there were not to be found in Parliament the men capable of discharging these duties. They had to be taken from business and commercial circles, where work and performance rather than words are made the test of capacity; and this deterioration of Parliament will unquestionably continue until a more reasonable conception of what constitutes capacity for public service is substituted for the present test. Democracy and talk are the natural concomitants the one of the other, and their progeny not infrequently is inept administration.

CHAPTER XIX

THE Parliament of '86 was elected on an Irish issue, and throughout its life Irish questions were irrepressible, dominant and kaleidoscopic. The fortunes of the Gladstonian Radicals hung upon the Irish Party. The personality of Parnell so grew and developed that he gradually became the Irish Party. Upon the popular estimate and valuation of this extraordinary man depended henceforth the success and failure of the Gladstone movement. If Parnell by his conduct and acts alienated sympathy and public response, down went the value of the Gladstonian Party stock. If, on the other hand, he could free himself from injurious allegations and charges made against him, up went the prospect of the return to power of the out-of-office Radicals. As the conflict between Unionism and Separatism progressed, it became clear to impartial onlookers that it was Parnell and not Gladstone who was the controlling and driving force of the latter. What he did, and not what Gladstone said, governed the situation, and this gravitation of power from the head of the larger party to the leader of the smaller became more and more marked. It has been one of the misfortunes of British internal politics that, from the date of the acceptance of Home Rule by the Radical Party, it ceased to be its own master, and (with the exception of the Parliament from 1906 to 1910, in which the Unionists had been shattered to pieces by its so-called Tariff₂ Reform)

it has been dependent upon the Irish vote for a majority. Anything seriously affecting Parnell's character had attached to it not only the momentum and excitement of a personal attack upon a most influential politician, but carried in its wake for good or for evil the fortunes of the advanced Radical Party. In the consequences of the verdict it provoked the issue was not only personal and political, but Imperial and world-wide.

Though the story has often before been told, it may not be out of place if, from the inward knowledge which my position gave me, I were briefly to review the situation as it existed at the commencement of the session of 1888.

In the communications made public partly by the voice of the Government in 1883 and partly by Mrs. O'Shea's subsequent reminiscences, it seems clear that Parnell had to make up his mind before he could get out of Kilmainham Gaol whether he should throw in his lot for the future with the moderates or the extremists of his party. He finally determined to take the moderate side and break with the extremists. Mrs. O'Shea put her whole influence into the scale to secure that end, but he incurred considerable personal risk by throwing over the extremists, and this no doubt accounted for his practice of leaving no address or indication where he was or was likely to be. One of his offers to the then Government was a proposal to communicate with an outrage-monger in the west and through him to try to stop outrage. Forster, the ex-Secretary for Ireland, pounced upon this in debate and stated that, after such an admission, he must decline any public co-operation with Parnell. The probability, therefore, is that

Parnell had had communications with the promoters of outrage; but it is improbable, knowing his character, that the letters either allowed or directly condoned outrage. Still, they might not be pleasant reading to the Radical Party, who, on account of Parnell's resuscitation as a respectable politician, relied upon his good name to carry them to victory. There were in Dublin a number of rascals, the scum of the revolutionary movement, ready to do anything for money for either side, and the most notorious of them as a blackmailer and concocter of false news was a man named Pigott. The infamy of his character had already obtained for him a very unsavoury reputation.

In England the principal owner of the *Times* was Mr. Walter, an upright, well-meaning pedant, with an adequate sense of his importance as the *Times* proprietor. He was ambitious in the sense of wishing to be handed down to posterity as a man who so utilised his advantages as to have become a saviour of his country. Unfortunately, he had neither the acumen nor perception necessary for the exceptional rôle he had undertaken.

There was therefore a combination of personalities and incidents all converging to a dramatic climax; the leader of a great political movement who was supposed to have dabbled in the manufacture of outrages and to have written letters on such subjects, a lot of scoundrels ready to bring evidence that there were such letters, and a rich and obstinate newspaper proprietor determined, on patriotic grounds, to spend any amount of money and time in getting hold of such letters. There was another coincidence which later on subjected the Government to much obloquy.

According to the custom of the times the Law Officers were free to take private work, and Sir Richard Webster, the Attorney-General of the Government, had been and was Standing Counsel to the *Times*.

Walter opened proceedings in 1887 by publishing a series of articles entitled " Parnellism and Crime," and a foolish and futile attempt made by two Unionist Members of Parliament to bring the editor of the *Times* to the bar of the House greatly embarrassed the Government in the further handling of this most difficult matter. Though Parnell at that time asked for a Select Committee to investigate the authenticity or falsity of the letters alleged to have been written by him, he did not press his demand with his usual aggressive pertinacity. It was alleged by some, who pretended to know the working of the inner ring of the Land League, that there were in existence letters written by Parnell the publication of which, even if they did not directly incite crime, would have been very damaging to his reputation and proved that he was cognisant of what was going on. To use a favourite expression coined at that time—it would show that he was able to regulate the " throttle-valve " of outrage. This may account for a certain hesitancy in his attitude during the earlier phases of the publication of these articles. It should also be remembered that, although those so-called facsimile letters entirely absorbed public attention, they were only part of the evidence offered of a wide-drawn and wholesale indictment of the Land League as traffickers in outrage and murder.

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against the *Times* for defamation and libel on the plea that he was a member of the party against which false accusations had been brought. Although a Nationalist, he was not on good terms with Parnell, and it was believed at the time that his object was not so much to clear himself as to embarrass Parnell. In the trial which ensued, Webster appeared as Counsel to the *Times*, and in discharge of that duty he read out a number of letters, not only those already published, but others in addition which he alleged had been written by Parnell and were in his handwriting. The inconvenience and impropriety of Law Officers engaging in private practice could not be more strongly illustrated than by the course of this trial. No member of the Government was consulted or had the least idea that their Attorney-General had intended to take this line of defence in a civil action. It was a political move of the utmost importance. If it had been proposed to use these letters officially in the House of Commons in debate, their origin, authenticity and method of acquirement would have been critically and microscopically examined before any Minister would have ventured to allude to them; but because they were in a brief given to a lawyer engaged in a civil action, that lawyer, though he was Attorney-General, treated them merely as matter relative to the duty he had been privately fee-ed to discharge. He accepted their authenticity upon the authority of his brief.

Webster was a most upright public servant, hard-working, courageous and straightforward, but, simply by adherence to the ordinary legal procedure in a civil case in which he was privately but professionally engaged, he personally as Attorney-General involved

the Government in a series of embarrassing and humiliating difficulties. Moreover, the line of defence which he took was artless and stupid, for by needlessly reading out all the letters purporting to be Parnell's which were in the possession of the *Times*, he let Parnell know exactly what they had and what they had not got. From that moment Parnell's attitude changed. He knew he could prove that all the letters read were either copies or forgeries ; in either case it was competent to him to deny them. He at once demanded vigorously and continuously an examination of the documents which he alleged had been forged by the *Times* to ruin him.

It is more than a generation since the incidents to which I allude occurred, and therefore there is no harm in referring to the incredible simplicity of Walter in the management of his case. The letters which he published had been obtained from a gang of criminals. It never occurred to him to employ either as solicitor or counsel men accustomed to deal with criminal cases. The fact that his family solicitor was also solicitor to the *Times* newspaper was quite sufficient to give him all the necessary qualifications. The intimacy of Walter with members of the Government, the strong and consistent support of the *Times* of the Unionist Party, and the unfortunate combination of the duties by which a lawyer was at the same time Attorney-General to the Government and Counsel for the *Times* gave substance to the allegation of our opponents that the Government and *Times* were working together to befoul the character of their leading political opponent. This feeling was not confined only to the credulous and suspicious, it was

widely held by persons of intelligence and standing. It became imperative, not only in the interests of the Government, but also of fair play and honourable treatment of an opponent, that a full, impartial inquiry should at once be instituted ; but there was no available tribunal for such a trial. A Committee of the House of Commons composed of two sets of partisans, each prejudiced and pledged in advance, would be a hopeless tribunal and one whose proceedings were sure to bring disrepute not only upon itself but upon the assembly who sanctioned it. Parnell obstinately declined to go to the law courts, as he maintained that, in the political atmosphere, he would not obtain a fair trial. A special court had therefore to be created, and the Government determined by Act of Parliament to set up a tribunal of three judges, to be named in the Act, with full powers to inquire not merely into the authenticity of the letters, but into the general allegations of the wholesale conspiracy to promote crime and outrage throughout Ireland.

From the moment the Bill containing these proposals was introduced up to the last moment of the discussion upon it, the House of Commons became the scene of the most unfair, acrimonious and scandalous imputations. The issues were momentous upon which the Commission had to adjudicate. Every effort was made, from Gladstone downward, both as regards the personnel of the Commission and the scope of its inquiries, to "square the pitch"—if I may use so slangy an expression. A great deal of manœuvring was, in the circumstances, to be expected, and up to a certain point was legitimate. On one part of the inquiry—namely, the authenticity of the letters—the Na-

tionalists, now that the *Times* had shown its hand, were confident of a favourable verdict. On the wider and general charges of sanction to and complicity of outrage and crime their consciences were uneasy. The Unionists were not confident, once they had perused the ill-expressed, uneducated letters which Webster had read out, of a verdict upon this point, though on the large issue they were certain of a general condemnation of Land League practices. As might be expected, each side tried to give more prominence to that part of the inquiry upon which they thought they would win and to push into the background that part upon which they might lose.

Smith, who could not be unfair if he tried, as Leader of the House did his best to hold the balance, but, unfortunately, whilst in charge of the Bill he became a suspect.

Walter was a great personal friend of Smith. The Government were about to give the go-by to the recognised courts of law by setting up under a new statute a special court to try the *Times*. This must subject that newspaper to immense trouble and expense. What could be more reasonable than that Smith should see Walter and explain to him why he must submit to this penalty? And doubtless in any such conversation Smith would have made it clear to Walter that it was entirely in consequence of his obstinacy in publishing letters before he had established their authenticity that the Government was compelled to take this exceptional action. Be this as it may, at any rate an interview was arranged; but unfortunately a well-known lady in Society saw Walter coming out of Smith's house, and, without thinking of the con-

sequence, imparted this piece of gossip to a leading Radical. At once the whole advertising and headline power of the Radical press was set in motion, and a furious press and Parliamentary attack was made upon Smith, who was denounced as conspiring and plotting with the editor of the *Times* to bolster up documents which both knew to be forgeries. The attack was overdone, though it badly wounded Smith; but our men were so incensed at the language used of—or rather, I should say, hurled at—Smith that they rallied to him. The Bill throughout was carried by large majorities and rapidly passed by the Lords. Messrs. Justices Hannen, Smith and Day, a trio of three exceptionally able judges, were appointed as the Court, and proceedings were fixed to begin on October 17th, 1888.

In the autumn Goschen and I spent part of our holidays in the Engadine. We constantly met and made mountain excursions together. We often discussed the pending inquiry and its probabilities and possibilities. On one point we were both equally confident. Looking at the *Times* staff—managerial, editorial and legal—composed as it was of men of experience, ability and high standing, it was unthinkable that the published letters had come through Pigott's hands to the *Times*. The man's character and antecedents were so well known that any supposition of this kind might be summarily dismissed as outside the pale of possibility.

CHAPTER XX

WHEN the Parnell Commission opened its inquiry, a whisper began to circulate itself until it attained the dimensions of a general rumour to the effect that the so-called facsimile letters had been obtained through Pigott's agency. To all of us who were Irish or in any way acquainted with Dublin gossip and reports, the idea was so incredible that we refused to accept it; but it was converted into an unpleasant fact by Pigott being called as the leading witness for the *Times* as to the authenticity of the letters. The disgust and dismay of the Irish Unionists were indescribable. We all knew what it meant. It was a foregone conclusion that Walter and his agents had been befooled and outwitted. The story need not now be repeated. The wretched man absolutely broke down under cross-examination, the so-called facsimile letters had no authority behind them but the opinion of some expert or other upon handwriting—evidence known by experience to be most unreliable. Pigott thereupon bolted, and shot himself abroad in order to avoid arrest and punishment.

As might be expected, the Home Rule Press and Party became delirious with delight. Parnell could appear nowhere except with a public ovation, and for a short time the Government was shaken to its very foundations. Parliament was not sitting, and public opinion soon began to assess at its true value the significance of what had occurred. The leading journal of the day—strongly Unionist—had received an almost knock-out blow; but the Government,

except through the unfortunate connection of the Attorney-General with the *Times*, was in no way responsible for what had occurred. They had done their best to set up a tribunal beyond suspicion to sift grave allegations made against a political opponent, and the fact that at the very outset of the inquiries the tribunal so specially created had proved the falsity of serious charges was testimony in favour of the course which the Government had advocated and taken. But that outside Parliament Pigott's exposure greatly damaged the Government in popular estimation is undeniable, and nothing but the staunchness of our men and their intuitive instinct that on the other counts of the indictment against Parnell and his party the verdict would be against them saved us from a Parliamentary collapse.

The Commission sat throughout 1889, and towards the end of that year it reported. Our opponents were so overjoyed at the proof of the forgery of the letters alleged to have been written by Parnell that they either ignored or did not follow the subsequent proceedings of the Commission; but from the day that the letters were disposed of, the *Times* counsel slowly but surely built up, by consecutive corroborative and general evidence, the most convincing proof of the criminality of the Land League. The process was slow, but, when finished, the general conclusions were overwhelming. During all this time the Radical and Home Rule Press were open-mouthed in their eulogy of the Commission for their exposure of the forged letters. They pretended that this was the only serious charge to be tried, and they committed themselves in advance to a support and eulogy of the tribunal which had not reported on the great bulk of the allegations to be investigated.

The full Report was issued in the year 1889-90, and whilst it acquitted Parnell as regards the letters, it found him and his confederates guilty of conspiracy by a system of coercion and intimidation to promote agrarian agitation against the payment of rent and tending to incite to sedition and the commission of crime. This judgment endorsed and sustained the indictment which for years past the Unionists, through the Press, in Parliament and on the platform, had made against the Nationalist Party. It was the most complete and unanswerable vindication of the opposition offered to the so-called Home Rule Party and to the policy by which all Ireland would have been put under the harrow of this criminal conspiracy.

Many were the surmises and great were the expectations as to what the Government would do with this Report. The Radical Party and Press were so committed by their previous praise of the Commission that it was difficult if not impossible for them to disparage the general conclusions at which that Commission had arrived ; but to frame any Parliamentary resolutions on the Report of the Commission and to carry them through Parliament would have been a task which would have taken months, would have led to great recrimination, and even when completed would not have advanced the Unionist cause. Beach, whose common sense at times almost developed to genius, suggested a very satisfactory and unanswerable solution of the difficulty. Why should we not move in the House of Commons that the Report be adopted ? The Government acted on this suggestion, and Smith gave notice of the intention of the Government to make such a motion. The Opposition was thoroughly taken aback ; they did not know what

to do; they could not directly oppose the motion, neither could they contest any part of the Report.

Parliament, and especially the House of Commons, has unexplainable and unaccountable moods. The debates on the appointment of the Commission were more virulent and personal than any that I can recollect in my Parliamentary career; the House was the scene of continuous tumult. The debate on the findings of the Report was one of the dullest that I ever recollect. Gladstone spoke with his usual eloquence, and he insisted upon a number of days being given to the debate; but the audience was extraordinarily scant and uninterested, and on one occasion we had a count-out. The two main features of the debate were, first, an unusually vigorous speech by Balfour, in which he trounced the Irishmen vigorously for their condonation of crime. They took his lecture and admonitions like lambs, and it was impossible not to feel that the more moderate of them recognised the truth and justice of the allegations of that part of the Report.

Churchill, on the other hand, made a very violent attack on the Government. He got a friendly Member of Parliament, Mr. Jennings, to move a rider to the Government motion. Jennings was a very capable man, whose qualifications and industry would well have made him eligible for office. He was an able writer, and he greatly distinguished himself as the editor of a New York paper which exposed illegal practices in New York. During the greater part of the time that he was so acting, his life was in considerable danger, but he never flinched. Churchill's speech was very coarse in its vocabulary and framed in very bad taste. In fact, it was so violent that Jennings subsequently got up and repudiated

it, stating that he had never intended that his motion should be so utilised, and expressing his entire disapproval of Churchill's attitude. With this speech, Churchill's last Unionist supporter vanished. Ultimately the Report was adopted by 339 to 268, and so ended this memorable political trial and verdict.

On looking back at what occurred, it is clear that the difficulties in which the Government were placed were entirely due to individuals interfering in matters which were outside their legitimate scope or capacity. The editor of a great newspaper should not attempt to institute through his columns a criminal prosecution of a political opponent, or, at any rate, if he is so minded, he should only act on evidence and facts which were absolutely indisputable. The two Members of Parliament who tried in 1887 to bring the editor of the *Times* to the bar of the House of Commons, again, outran their functions and mainly contributed to the subsequent confusion. But this great inquiry and the embarrassment it caused the Government through their leading officer being engaged privately as a counsel put an end to the practice of Law Officers of the Crown embarking during their tenure of office in private business. The antagonism between private duty to a client and public obligation to a Government might be irreconcilable, and in the present instance it proved itself so to be.

Parnell was now at the summit of his power and reputation. It is true that the organisation of which he was head had been branded as a criminal conspiracy and convicted of outrage and crime, but the British public, though a law-abiding and crime-hating community, are very lax in their condonation of crime if it can be in any way associated with a popular political movement. There is ingrained in

the mind of the average man in the street the idea that Governments when in opposition to people "struggling to be free" (to use a platform phrase) are apt to be high-handed and arbitrary in their antagonism to such movements, that such high-handed action begets violence, and that, regrettable and reprehensible as are such deeds, a portion of the responsibility for their perpetration rests upon those governing the country where they occur. Such is the easy philosophy of the average politician when in opposition. This was the attitude of the Gladstonian Home Rulers during the whole of the struggle in Ireland between organised outrage and the executive authoritative Parliament. The murder at night of harmless civilians and the maiming and mutilation of dumb animals were horrible in themselves, but they could be explained away, and a portion of the censure which they provoked might be transferred to the Government for their mistaken policy.

Parnell now became involved in a transaction far less criminal and reprehensible than outrages upon man and beast, but one which could not be politically explained away. He was suddenly made co-respondent in a divorce case by one of his Parliamentary colleagues. The case, from the eminence of those affected by it, attracted general attention and was universally read down to the smallest detail. It was characteristic of Parnell that in his callous indifference to British public opinion he made no effort whatever to veil or cover up the transaction. It came out in all its details with the fullest possible publicity.

It will occur to most people that murder, outrage, the destruction of property and the maiming of cattle were offences more cogent against the morality of divine and human law than a liaison

between a bachelor and a married woman, especially if it were generally known that he intended to marry her as soon as the law permitted him. But the Nonconformist conscience did not so think. It had condoned the findings of the Parnell Commission upon murder and outrage; but a decree nisi in a Divorce Court was more than it could swallow. Parnell must go, and an intimation to this effect was made by Morley to Gladstone as the ultimatum of a great Radical caucus meeting held in the north of England. Gladstone thereupon, but not before, took up his pen and wrote a letter to Parnell in which he suggested to him in diplomatic and circumlocutory language a temporary departure from the scene of his activities until the storm had blown over. Parnell's secretary became the recipient of the letter, and he deliberately kept it back until Parnell had at an impending meeting been re-elected for the year as leader of the Irish Party.

Parnell brooked no rival, and in his masterful assertiveness he had always declined to take in any shape orders or instructions from any outside authority. Gladstone's letter infuriated him. He replied by a violent personal denunciation of the writer of the letter, impugning his sincerity and disputing the *bona fides* of his Home Rule declarations. It was a proclamation of war to the knife between the two men. The Roman Catholic Bishops then stepped into the fray. At first they showed a disposition to support Parnell, then they turned against him. All who watch Irish popular movements are aware that, while Protestant co-operation is always evoked at the commencement of a movement, if a Protestant becomes a real leader he is sooner or later shunted for one of the rival faith.

Parnell's turn had arrived, but he stood at bay with a ferocity, resource and vigour which astounded even those who knew him best. The division between the Anti-Parnellites and the Parnellites was roughly in the proportion of two to one so far as Parliamentary representation was concerned. A battle lasting for some time raged in Committee Room No. 15 of the House of Commons between these two rival parties. Although outnumbered and overmatched in debate, Parnell, by sheer personal determination, kept his assailants at bay for weeks. The language used and the respective attitudes of the combatants towards one another greatly outdid in truculence and violence the hottest Irish debates in the Commons, and the epithets habitually used in the past towards Irish Ministers seemed flavourless and mild compared with the vituperation with which the two parties belaboured each other. A formal secession was ultimately made by the majority from Parnell's leadership, and two distinct and antagonistic bodies were then formed out of the old homogeneous Home Rule Party. Parnell at once became the critic of the official Opposition, and in a marked manner he supported in the session of 1891 a Government Bill upon land in Ireland. The contest was then transferred to Ireland, and certain by-elections were fought with extraordinary fierceness by the two conflicting parties; but the priestly influence and the latent hostility which his overbearing personality had sown were too much for Parnell. He was defeated at election after election, and the personal strain imposed upon him by this continuous fighting was more than he could bear. It was reported that he was ill. He suddenly came back to England to his wife, and a few days afterwards, to the intense surprise of the

political world, his death was announced as occurring on October 7th, 1891.

John Redmond succeeded to the leadership of the remnant of the Parnellite Party, but he was subsequently defeated at Cork and had to take refuge in Waterford. Justin McCarthy became the head of the Anti-Parnellite Party.

Thus ended the career of the most remarkable and inscrutable character I ever met in politics. Step by step he gained his power and influence by a dogged adherence to tactics at once extortionate and unreasonable. By a continuous misuse of the rules of procedure in debate he so embarrassed Parliament and the Government as to make himself a force to be reckoned with. In this respect he was absolutely deaf to all instincts of fair play or give-and-take ; but he put the Irish Party in a position of authority and influence in the House of Commons which they never attained before, and being so entrenched he was able to dictate terms to those who wanted his political co-operation. I have often wondered if, had he lived, he would have been a real help in solving the everlasting Irish tangle. If he had not taken to political life he would have been a remorseless utilitarian. As it was, in his early life he was a very harsh landlord ; his only relaxation was practical mechanics and their application to mining and industry. Of sentiment, romance or poetry he had not a glimmering, and his speeches clearly indicated this want of emotion ; but they showed throughout a high concentration of purpose upon practicability. He had none of the tricks or devices of the popular orator ; he never attempted to make an altruistic or unselfish appeal to his audience. Unlike most of the popular orators, he put objects before words,

consequences before transient applause. He never made an important speech without carefully weighing in advance how far the language he used would further him another step to his ultimate goal. To use a military phrase, the objective to be gained was limited, but he generally achieved it. To tradition he did sometimes appeal, but only in the sense of inflaming against England the latent hatred of certain sections of Irish opinion. A man so constituted could not fail to have within him certain instincts of statesmanship. The bunkum and rhodomontade so dear to Irish orators he swept summarily on one side. He was an aristocrat to the tips of his fingers; he treated with chilling hauteur all his followers save one or two intimates. To them he evinced the charm which a strong man can generally command when he unbends. He had no belief in popular government or control, as is shown by his disparagement in his letters to Mrs. O'Shea of the movements and people whom he controlled and met. He was an irreligious Cromwell—apt, just but inexorable, the stamp of governor or government the Irish Celt wants and under which he thrives. Throughout the earlier stages of his leadership he was in the dilemma in which all agitators find themselves who try to combine a nominally constitutional agitation with secret societies of violence and murder. In justice to him it must be said that he was very averse to extremist methods, but he dared not openly denounce or flout the societies behind him. He kept on the border-line by eulogising the benefits obtained and half-heartedly repudiating the violence employed for their attainment. His ruling impulse was dislike of England imbibed with his mother's milk, for she was an implacable foe of Great Britain. Had he,

apart from this feeling of hostility for England, any real love for Ireland? Would he, if he could have obtained a Home Rule Parliament, have respected the limitations imposed upon it and endeavoured to observe his part of the compact? I doubt it. But, at any rate, so long as he was alive he was not only a plenipotentiary with whom a national bargain could be made, but he had put himself in such a position that he could enforce upon his followers for the time being any terms to which he agreed. By sheer force of will and indifference to any opinion save his own he ground into shape and into a homogeneous unity the discordant elements of Irish antipathy to England.

It was almost comical to notice the utter collapse of the official Opposition so soon as Parnell withdrew his support from them. The Queen's Speech passed almost without debate, Bills were introduced and Estimates agreed to with almost bewildering celerity, and the whole business of the Government, both in 1891 and 1892, passed with a smoothness and lack of opposition which was an amazing contrast to the hard and continuous fighting which hitherto it had been our lot to encounter.

About this time an attempt was made by a group of Welsh members to establish in the House of Commons the principle that Wales was so distinct a nationality from Great Britain as to require separate treatment. In many ways, on Bills, resolutions and in debate, an endeavour was made by this knot of Welshmen to differentiate thus between Great Britain and Wales. Foremost amongst them was a young member called Lloyd George. He had taken a very prominent part in the dispute between Lord Penrhyn and his quarrymen in North Wales. The manager of these works was unpopular, and the

controversy resolved itself into a fight between Lord Penrhyn's right to nominate a manager who suited him and the workmen's claim that they should have a voice in the nomination and selection of such a manager. After a long and acrimonious fight Lord Penrhyn, by his imperturbable equanimity, won, and the quarrymen were badly beaten.

A great many discussions took place on the subject in the House of Commons. Lloyd George then signalised himself by the violence of his attacks on Penrhyn and other Welsh landlords.

Shortly afterwards a Bill was introduced to give the ecclesiastical authorities of the Church of England greater powers than they possessed in dispensing with the services of criminous clergymen (that is to say, clergymen who, from misbehaviour, came into contact with the law), and a Bill for this purpose was brought into the House of Commons. Gladstone was an ardent supporter of the principle embodied in the Bill, and so was the great majority of the House of Commons. A small group of members, headed by Lloyd George, flouted Gladstone's authority, and, contrary to all sense of justice and fair play, endeavoured to deprive the Church of England of the right of getting rid of its black sheep. Here, again, discussion was bitter, and in it Lloyd George took a prominent part, but he rarely, if ever, polled more than twenty followers. This obstruction was a barefaced misuse of the procedure of the House, and was openly prompted by a desire to increase the unpopularity of the Church in Wales by keeping criminous clerks in their incumbencies.

There were various other controversial subjects in which Lloyd George took a keen interest, invariably enlisting himself against the interests of

Church, land and Unionism. During this period he was learning to speak. He had a charming voice, a great facility of expression and a very free Celtic imagination, and he always attracted attention by the virulent intensity of his speeches and demeanour and the personal imputations which he showered right and left upon his oponents. Not only did he bitterly oppose the Boer War, but he publicly asserted that Chamberlain had a corrupt motive in advocating it. This course of defamation he continued right up to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. He then at once dropped the rôle of a demagogue and assumed an attitude of resolute patriotism which he has maintained ever since.

Quite recently I met a very clever lady who had known Lloyd George from his infancy. She was a Welshwoman and well aware of the good and bad attributes of her race. She told me that Lloyd George was the incarnation of many of its best qualities and of some of its worst defects. He was fitful, masterful, emotional and inaccurate. On the other hand, he had any amount of pluck, resilience and receptivity and an intuitive instinct for finding out in any controversy the point of least resistance and shaping his course accordingly. Plausible compromise rather than stable settlement was the bent of his interference and of his action, and he lived so much for the present that he was apt unduly to disregard the future. He was very kind to those whom he liked, and he had a genuine sympathy for all who were in trouble or distress. He was the son of a Unitarian Minister, and when he commenced public life his education had been limited, his knowledge of general subjects slight and of world-wide politics nil. Though he had little business or financial aptitude, yet as Chancellor of the Ex-

controversy resolved itself into a fight between Lord Penrhyn's right to nominate a manager who suited him and the workmen's claim that they should have a voice in the nomination and selection of such a manager. After a long and acrimonious fight Lord Penrhyn, by his imperturbable equanimity, won, and the quarrymen were badly beaten.

A great many discussions took place on the subject in the House of Commons. Lloyd George then signalised himself by the violence of his attacks on Penrhyn and other Welsh landlords.

Shortly afterwards a Bill was introduced to give the ecclesiastical authorities of the Church of England greater powers than they possessed in dispensing with the services of criminous clergymen (that is to say, clergymen who, from misbehaviour, came into contact with the law), and a Bill for this purpose was brought into the House of Commons. Gladstone was an ardent supporter of the principle embodied in the Bill, and so was the great majority of the House of Commons. A small group of members, headed by Lloyd George, flouted Gladstone's authority, and, contrary to all sense of justice and fair play, endeavoured to deprive the Church of England of the right of getting rid of its black sheep. Here, again, discussion was bitter, and in it Lloyd George took a prominent part, but he rarely, if ever, polled more than twenty followers. This obstruction was a barefaced misuse of the procedure of the House, and was openly prompted by a desire to increase the unpopularity of the Church in Wales by keeping criminous clerks in their incumbencies.

There were various other controversial subjects in which Lloyd George took a keen interest, invariably enlisting himself against the interests of

Church, land and Unionism. During this period he was learning to speak. He had a charming voice, a great facility of expression and a very free Celtic imagination, and he always attracted attention by the virulent intensity of his speeches and demeanour and the personal imputations which he showered right and left upon his oponents. Not only did he bitterly oppose the Boer War, but he publicly asserted that Chamberlain had a corrupt motive in advocating it. This course of defamation he continued right up to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. He then at once dropped the rôle of a demagogue and assumed an attitude of resolute patriotism which he has maintained ever since.

Quite recently I met a very clever lady who had known Lloyd George from his infancy. She was a Welshwoman and well aware of the good and bad attributes of her race. She told me that Lloyd George was the incarnation of many of its best qualities and of some of its worst defects. He was fitful, masterful, emotional and inaccurate. On the other hand, he had any amount of pluck, resilience and receptivity and an intuitive instinct for finding out in any controversy the point of least resistance and shaping his course accordingly. Plausible compromise rather than stable settlement was the bent of his interference and of his action, and he lived so much for the present that he was apt unduly to disregard the future. He was very kind to those whom he liked, and he had a genuine sympathy for all who were in trouble or distress. He was the son of a Unitarian Minister, and when he commenced public life his education had been limited, his knowledge of general subjects slight and of world-wide politics nil. Though he had little business or financial aptitude, yet as Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer, when confronted at the beginning of the war with financial and economic problems of perplexity and peril, he successfully met them with drastic measures such as moratoria and compulsory-interference with the free play of the money market. No highlytrained Chancellor of the Exchequer would have ventured upon such heterodoxy or taken such risks.

Writing, as I now am, three years after the conclusion of the war, it cannot be disputed that it was largely due to Lloyd George's persistence and audacity that we won. Unfortunately, he has not been equally successful in handling the industrial and economic problems which were the aftermath of the war. In reply to a distinguished soldier whom I met and who was indulging in wholesale abuse of Lloyd George, I said, "You cannot deny that he won the war for us." "Yes," replied the officer; "but he has made the price of everything since the war double what it ought to be." And here I come to what I think is his special racial weakness. He cannot help making himself pleasant to the deputations who come to see him, and when the demand of a deputation is to get from him something out of somebody else, he is too ready on the spur of the moment to fall in with their request.

Still, one cannot fail to have sincere admiration for one who has overcome all the difficulties of lack of wealth, influence, education and station and who has held his own successfully for many years with the biggest men whom the world could produce. One may grumble at and lament his indiscretions and impetuosities, but we owe him an eternal debt of gratitude for the courage and leadership which at critical moments—both during the war and afterwards—he has exhibited as the head of the British Government.

CHAPTER XXI

THE account that I have just given of Parnell's political collapse and death somewhat upsets the chronology of the period upon which I am writing. Although Ireland was to the outside public apparently the only subject upon which the House of Commons was engaged, a great deal of non-Irish useful work was done by the Government, and the legislation necessary to effect our objects set in motion influences which have since been continuous in the change and development they brought about.

In 1890 we introduced a Free Education Bill, abolishing the fee payable by the parent to the school at which his child or children had to attend. It gave a relief which was much appreciated at the time. These fees ranged from a penny to ninepence per child weekly, and in abolishing it we took the average between these two limits and this gave about threepence per child to each school. But this average did not work fairly in practice. There were in the manufacturing districts—notably in Lancashire—so-called voluntary schools which existed on high fees and the payment by the Education Department on the results of their examinations. They were the best and most efficient schools in their respective localities and attended by the children of the high-class artisans who gladly paid the larger fee to protect their children from the ailments and diseases which contact with ill-nourished and neglected

children not infrequently engendered. These schools could not exist on a threepenny fee, and the inability of such schools to support themselves necessitated fresh educational changes promoted some twelve years later by Balfour in 1902.

A Naval and Military Committee of the Cabinet was in this year established and subsequently grew into the Public Defence Committee, the unity and organisation of which alone saved us from destruction in the earlier stages of the Great War of 1914-1919. An Irish Land Purchase Bill was also carried, thus developing the only principle on which the impossible system of dual ownership could be justly terminated. By the steady application of purchase we have almost eliminated from Irish woes the old and murderous antagonism in vogue so long as the dual system of ownership was in force.

Churchill's health had of recent years steadily deteriorated, and with it his power of speech and political activity. He was a mere shadow of his former self. A voyage to and stay in South Africa was suggested to him by his friends, and before leaving he made a very touching speech to his relatives and friends.

The collapse of Parnell and the ill-health and temporary retirement of Churchill very much eased the position of the Government in the House of Commons, and it was well, as our chief, W. H. Smith, began to show evident signs of exhaustion and overwork. His sister died about this time, and he told me on his return from the funeral that his family was not long-lived, that sixty-five or thereabouts was an age which they seldom passed, and that he was just arriving at that period. The worry over the Parnell Commission had greatly weakened him.

Upon his shoulders in the preceding year, in addition to all his strictly official work, had fallen the whole burden of the action by which alone the liquidation of the House of Baring was averted. For several years past he had suffered terribly from eczema, his arms being entirely swathed in cotton-wool to alleviate the acute irritation caused by contact with any rough substance. In 1891 suddenly all these spots and irritation ceased, and their disappearance was associated with an attack of gout. We did not think much of this ailment, as Smith seemed cheerful and to be recovering his strength.

The Kaiser paid in July a visit to this country, and Salisbury entertained him for some days at Hatfield. It was a magnificent reception. The large house and several minor residences in the town were packed with the notables of the country and the Kaiser's entourage. On the second day of this visit Smith arrived, looking worn but in good spirits. Whether he caught a chill that night, the weather being cold for the time of year, or whether the gout touched some vital organ is not known, but at any rate next day he looked ghastly. He asked Edward Stanhope and me to walk with him in the park during the afternoon, which we gladly did. After we had gone a little way, he said, "The air has done me good, but I am tired, as I did not sleep last night. I will go in and lie down." He came to dinner, but all who saw him were shocked at his appearance. No one could look at him without seeing that Death had claimed him. He went to bed early and was taken up to London next day; but he was incapable of further work, and he died a few weeks later at Walmer Castle, having just accepted the office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

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His death was very widely lamented by the public, but to his close associates it was a loss for which nothing could compensate. In my own case I lost not only a chief for whose character and guidance I had the highest respect, but a friend and companion whose political and personal career had been inseparably interwoven with my own for the past twenty-three years. We came into Parliament in the same year; we were for some years the only Tory representatives in the whole of the constituencies of London north of the Thames; we had been colleagues in every Tory Government since 1874; we had worked hand in hand, not only on questions inside Parliament, but in all that related to the organisation and development of the machinery necessary to make effective the Tory vote in the vastly augmented constituencies of North London. I cannot recall a single difference of substance or principle during the whole of this period of joint work. It was very hard to differ permanently from Smith. I never came across any man whose judgment was so well balanced, whose forecast was so sound and so soon realised, or who, when once a decision was arrived at, pushed it with more courage and decision. In the political world, where fluency is a power and speech the first test of a man's capacity for public life, strength of voice is not infrequently associated with strength of will and a weak voice with a lack of character. Smith was a poor speaker, and his voice was weak, with no variety of cadence. It took the House of Commons some years to find out after Smith became its leader, that behind these unattractive failings there was an immense courage, a rare industry and an unfailing sense of duty. In physical contests there is always an admiration for the pluck which enables an over-

matched man to stand up boldly against one greatly his superior in physique. But in a perpetual mental fight the courage which night after night sustains a politician to fight successfully the intellectual and histrionic odds against which he has to contend from the special endowments of his opponents is a pluck of a higher, nobler and more enduring type than any mere physical display of endurance.

For years in debate and in all the arts and wiles of Parliamentary duelling Smith was heavily out-matched by Gladstone and Parnell ; yet night after night he stood up serene, smiling but indomitable, and when, at the end of four years' unbroken fight, the results were noted and embodied in legislation and policy, Smith had won all down the line. He was, in my judgment, the most successful of all the House of Commons leaders that I have known or served under. His opponents' two main objects were to make Ireland ungovernable and the House of Commons unmanageable. Then Home Rule would of necessity become inevitable. In Ireland law and order were rehabilitated, the procedure in the House of Commons was so improved as to make the majority masters, and a mass of most useful legislation, including a great scheme of Local Government, a Mines Regulation Bill, a Free Education Bill, the total reorganisation of the Navy, the establishment of a Public Defence Committee, were, in addition to many other Acts, placed upon the Statute Book. If Smith could have strutted about and advertised his remarkable achievements, the public would have realised what it had lost by his death.

His career was extraordinary, if not unique. He had no public-school or university training. As a

boy he went into his father's business—at that time quite small, but which he made into a gigantic monopoly for the sale of penny newspapers at a profit. Having placed this business, by his careful selection of subordinates and by bold and expensive experiments, upon such a footing as to outvie competition, he came into political life. He began his official career as Secretary to the Treasury ; he then went to the Admiralty ; in 1885 he was Secretary of State for War ; and then, Ireland being the danger-signal, he became Irish Secretary. Again he returned to the War Office, and when Churchill suddenly resigned the leadership of the House of Commons he was asked by Salisbury, and with the unanimous approval of his colleagues, to take Churchill's place. He had become a very rich man ; no one could have made a better use of his wealth. Though he was a munificent Churchman and a most generous landlord and employer, he never refused response to outside and deserving appeals ; he was the truest and most reliable of friends ; and he carried to a higher standard than any public man I have ever known his constant admonition to the House of Commons : " Do your duty."

CHAPTER XXII

SMITH's death necessitated the selection of a House of Commons leader. In public opinion, three excellent candidates were in the running—Beach, Goschen and Balfour. The first two were not only senior in Parliamentary service, but they both had behind them a longer record of official work in the highest posts of administration. In the Parliamentary world, however, there was practical unanimity that the younger and less experienced man should succeed to the vacancy. Balfour's rare and attractive gifts of speech, his indifference to criticism and his unfailing ability to more than hold his own in the roughest sword-play of debate had endeared him to the whole Unionist Party. His youth and charm of manner made him the darling of the female politician and Society leaders; the comic papers dubbed him "Prince Arthur."

In coming home with Beach from Smith's funeral, he said to me, "There is, under existing conditions, only one candidate for poor Smith's post; the Party will have no one but Balfour." Goschen, admirable as had been his work and high as his claims could have been put, took exactly the same view.

Astounding as it may seem to those who do not know Ireland or understand Irish mentality, it is a fact that at that moment Balfour was the most popular man in that country. He had smashed up the Land League and relieved the agrarian com-

munity at large from the terrorism which this organisation had exercised in the districts where it was supreme. He had made mincemeat in debate of the rodomontade and exaggeration upon which the Irish politician lives. Despite the abuse still showered upon him by the Nationalist Press, the people at large knew that he had been their saviour.

As soon as order was re-established, Balfour made clear that his object was not repression of legitimate public opinion, but by measures such as Land Purchase, Light Railway Acts, Congested District Boards and prompt relief to districts suffering from shortage, to ameliorate the whole of the social and economic structure of Ireland. Dillon, the most vitriolic of Nationalists, made a violent attack upon him for his management of the distressed in certain districts in the West of Ireland. The Swinford Board of Guardians, an extreme Nationalist body, passed in consequence a stinging vote of censure upon Dillon, stating that they preferred an official like Balfour, who had tried to meet their wants, to a professional politician whose voice and attitude were purely obstructive and unhelpful.

The session of 1892 was uneventful, for the shadow of dissolution was too near to encourage the prosecution of any serious contentious business. To find a successor to Balfour as Chief Secretary for Ireland was no easy task. He had so effectively done his work and Ireland was so quiescent, that it was thought advisable to appoint in his place a good man of business who, whilst firm in the impartial administration of the law, would bring capacity and experience to bear upon the development of the material prosperity of Ireland. Jackson, who for the past five years had been an ideal Secretary to the Treasury,

supplied just the qualities required for such supervision and work. A number of changes throughout the Ministry necessarily occurred, and the re-election of certain Ministers who had been promoted had to be pushed through. So great was the shock given to the whole Radical organisation by Parnell's death and collapse that all the Ministers seeking re-election were easily returned.

Hartington, through the death of his father, was called up to the House of Lords. Thus each wing of the Unionist Party in the House of Commons was simultaneously deprived of its old leader—a subtraction of practical sagacity from our councils which we could ill afford.

There was not a Parliamentary kick left in our opponents in the Commons. The Address was voted after only four days' talk, and Navy and Army Estimates passed through with little criticism. Both sides concentrated their attention upon election issues. The writs were issued in June. The contest was dull so far as new matter or parties were concerned. Both wings of the Unionist organisation were now so cemented together as to ensure the avoidance of triangular duels. It was, in our judgment, a certainty that we should be beaten, but not by much. The daily discharge of duty during six years of office is sure to alienate a certain proportion of the voters, and an inextinguishable craving for change always influences sections of the electorate. It is not generally known how small a percentage of change, if spread over a large area, can convert an apparently irresistible majority into a minority. Five to ten per cent. is more than sufficient to overthrow any Government. I estimated that Gladstone's majority would be between 38 and 45. This was not a bad

shot, for, including 81 Nationalists and Parnellites, his followers numbered 355 against 315 Unionists—a majority of 40, too small a margin to enable them, except by the inexorable application of the closure, to carry through contentious or hard-fought measures.

The Government, though in a minority, determined to meet Parliament. The old Speaker was re-elected; and then Asquith was put up to move officially on behalf of the joint Opposition a vote of want of confidence upon the Address. He had greatly distinguished himself as a Junior Counsel before the Parnell Commission, and he had also evinced exceptional powers of speech in debate. He was clearly marked out for permanent Parliamentary distinction.

For some reason or other which at that time was not very intelligible, it was considered necessary to spin out this debate for four nights. Upon such a foregone conclusion and upon such thrashed-out matter it was not very easy to get speakers on our side. I went out of London before the concluding day of the debate, and during my absence a letter requesting me to sum up the debate on our side missed me. Harry Chaplin, being in town, had to take my place, and lucky it was that he did so. I never have been of any use in talking against time. Chaplin was gifted with rare fluency of speech, and as a rule could spin out his talk to any length. On the night in question it was from a tactical point of view most desirable that we should pool our full strength, but certain of our Party were slack, and at 9.30 we were considerably short of our full numbers. The Opposition was fully aware of this.

Chaplin was our last speaker, and he had a most difficult task for more than an hour and a half in

talking against continuous interruptions and jeers. But he held his own gallantly, and though constantly gravelled for want of matter, he still continued to talk. At 10.50 all but two of our men had arrived, and these two were at last located and found to be playing billiards at the Carlton. This was known to the Opposition, and the noise redoubled. Poor Chaplin, at the last gasp of endless perorations, was informed, "Five minutes more, old boy, and it will be all right," and so he held on. In came the two culprits, and amidst the vociferous applause of both sides he sat down, having most successfully discharged the unpleasant duty imposed upon him.

The amendment was carried by 350 to 310, the exact majority of the recent election, and next day Salisbury resigned office.

Goschen had summed up in his electioneering campaign the record of the work of the Admiralty. He had every right so to speak, as without his aid this enhancement of strength would have been impossible. His statement was as follows :

"In 1886 we had 499 breech-loading guns afloat and in reserve ; in 1892 we have 1,868. Of light quick-firing guns we had 33 in 1886 ; in 1892 we have 1,715. Of torpedoes we had 820 ; we now have 2,874. Of seagoing ships at home and abroad and in reserve we had a tonnage of 342,000 ; now it is 544,000. Of ships of 15-knots speed and upwards afloat and building, excluding torpedo-boats, we had 57 ; we now have 140. Of officers and men we had 61,400 ; we have now 74,100. I say that is progress which we put before the people to show that the money has not been wasted, that we have something to show for our money, that we are a stronger people more ready to defend our interests in every part of the globe. Our coaling-stations are better

defended, our arsenals are more secure, our men are armed with better rifles, and they return to more sanitary barracks."

The actual increase in material and personnel was not the most noticeable feature of importance. In organisation, in mobilisation, in the maintenance of adequate reserves both of men and material and their adaptation for emergent use, the Navy had made and was making extraordinary progress. It was no longer a fleet on paper, but one in full being and thoroughly efficient,

In looking back over a long official experience there is no part of my career which was so joyous and exhilarating as my Admiralty appointment. I was First Lord almost continuously from June 1885 to June 1892, though there was a short break in 1886 during Gladstone's short-lived third administration. Provided you can come to terms with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the Admiralty you are less subject to interference from outside either from Parliament or from your colleagues than is any other Department. Your work and the Service of which you are the head do not departmentally intrude themselves into the ken of other offices. You may be asked on their behalf to do certain work or make certain a distribution of ships; but this comes to you rather as a favour to be granted than a compulsory requisition. If you ask your Naval Board judiciously and tactfully and select them carefully, they become a great help to you inside the office and outside a protection against interference. Unlike the War Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty is acknowledged and treated by the whole of the Navy as their head. Loyal and willing service is

given to him. Compliance with his orders and any information he wants are always forthcoming. Naval officers have no axe to grind except the promotion of the efficiency of their service. Thus a homogeneity of aim is established and maintained (provided you make efficiency and not mere economy your primary object) such as exists in no other Department of State. The First Lord's business is to steer the Navy through Parliamentary and political difficulty; the business of the Naval Lords is to help him and show him how to reform and improve those branches of the Service which are under their respective control. They may ask for more than can be given them, but if the objection is *bona fide* and reasonable, they will be the first to accept it.

The principle which we were enabled to establish through the operation of the Naval Defence Act and the ideas it embodied next year brought Gladstone's political career to a close. Goschen, who knew his unfailing propensity to starve Navy and Army expenditure, was most anxious that our naval policy should be so protected by an Act of Parliament as to prevent the future Prime Ministers from smothering it. The Act came to a termination in 1895, and the shipbuilding it sanctioned, which in volume diminished year by year, could not be curtailed except by a repeal of the Act. It was, however, competent for a future Government to nullify the object of the Act by refusing in the final years of its operation to supplement its diminishing output by a fresh building programme.

We left office in 1892, and in the next year Gladstone brought his obstructive instincts into play by refusing to acquiesce in the continuance of the shipbuilding necessary to maintain our standard of

equality with the combined fleets of any two nations. The country had learned its lesson ; it approved of this policy of increased insurance. Members of Parliament were cognisant of this feeling, and Ministers generally were in favour of it. The story of Gladstone's compulsory retirement is graphically told in Lord Morley's *Recollections* (vol. ii, pp. 1-10). As the old man was obdurate, Morley was commissioned by his colleagues to inform Mrs. Gladstone that her husband must go at once or in February 1894, and go he did. The full details, however, of his retirement belong to the narrative of the succeeding year, 1894.

CHAPTER XXIII

GLADSTONE'S new Cabinet had a smaller number of Whigs in it than he had hitherto been accustomed to accommodate. Granville was gone, and, with the exception of Rosebery, the younger Whigs had shown few signs of exceptional ability. A desperate effort was made by Labouchere to include himself in the Cabinet; but the Queen was obdurate against his claims, and Gladstone, not unwillingly, acquiesced in her objection. Labouchere attracted a good deal of attention whilst an active Member of Parliament, and he was popular in certain circles; but I frankly own that his tricks and personality were very repugnant to me, and I am certain that he would have been an intolerable nuisance to any Cabinet of which he became a member. Amongst the other offices, Harcourt took that of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Morley returned to his old place in Ireland. Lord Spencer succeeded me at the Admiralty, and a number of young Radicals, of whom Asquith was the most notable, were distributed throughout the Government.

Ireland at once dominated the situation, and a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into the cases of evicted tenants. Sir James Matthew, who was a Judge of the High Court, a Radical and a man of autocratic temperament, was made chairman of the Commission. Soon after its appointment the Commission broke up and accomplished little or

equality with the combined fleets of any two nations. The country had learned its lesson ; it approved of this policy of increased insurance. Members of Parliament were cognisant of this feeling, and Ministers generally were in favour of it. The story of Gladstone's compulsory retirement is graphically told in Lord Morley's *Recollections* (vol. ii, pp. 1-10). As the old man was obdurate, Morley was commissioned by his colleagues to inform Mrs. Gladstone that her husband must go at once or in February 1894, and go he did. The full details, however, of his retirement belong to the narrative of the succeeding year, 1894.

and traditions of a century of British Prime Ministers and statesmen, and the age and antecedents of the daring adventurer gave a romantic novelty to his enterprise. Six years of hard experience and contact with the realities of Irish life and demands left a much smaller margin for empirical prophecy and optimism. As a physical and intellectual exhibition (for Gladstone was in his eighty-second year in 1892 as compared with seventy-six in 1886), this performance was astounding: voice, manner, gesture and elocution such as any young man might envy and envy in vain; but as a practical solution it was as futile as his previous proposals. All the old fallacies were paraded with pomp: the happy combination of Austria and Hungary, Sweden and Norway, Russia and Finland, the anxiety of the great mass of Irish people to live on terms of amity and goodwill with Englishmen and loyalists within the limits and conditions of an Empire in which the Parliament at Westminster was to be the sole and only authority—these and a good many other delusions were again trotted out and caparisoned with the impassioned rhetoric of a consummate orator and actor. It was felt on our side that, after the experience of 1886, it was advisable, as soon as Gladstone had finished, to put up at once a Front Bench man to follow and traverse his whole contention. It was not easy to get anyone to undertake so onerous a debating task, and, assuming the man was found who was ready to undertake this duty, would he be adequate to it? Edward Clarke was finally fixed upon as the speaker, and he was well qualified for the task: he was one of the best leading speakers of the day, he had an admirable Parliamentary style, fearless, straight and self-confident, and both

British Empire is racially and in other characteristics so different from the dominant Imperial race as to necessitate its recognition as a special, national or self-governing entity, how can any man pretend that after this admission Imperial authority can be enforced over the community so enfranchised except with their consent? You cannot declare war against your quondam subjects because they, having been recognised as a separate and distinct nationality, have their own ideas as to how they are to be governed. Moreover, the machinery ostensibly set up to settle and enforce Imperial authority over such autonomous districts is ludicrously inadequate and unsuited for that task.

Amongst the various big men whom the United States have sent to this country as their Ambassadors, none ranks higher as a jurisprudent and constitutional lawyer than Mr. Phelps. He was discretion itself, and could not be induced to discuss the Home Rule Bill or its provisions, though from the standpoint of a great constitutional lawyer accustomed to plead before the Supreme Court of the United States on questions of controversy between the Powers of the Federal Government and the sovereign rights of the individual, his knowledge would have been most valuable. Shortly after his retirement from his ambassadorial duties he died, and Sir Henry Maine, who was very intimate with him, communicated to me the purport of the last conversation he had with him. Phelps expressed a very high opinion of the ability of our legal men. In civil and criminal procedure he considered them fully equal to the legal profession of his own country, but there was one form of constitutional jurisprudence in which they had little or no experience. Of the class of

question which was constantly coming up before the Supreme Court of the United States as to the definition or limitation of the relative powers of Federal and State Governments our lawyers knew little. The drafting of the Home Rule Bill, especially as regards the clauses dealing with controversy and disputes between the two Governments of Great Britain and Ireland, was, in his judgment, conclusive proof of this ignorance and want of experience. The foundation of the constitution of America was investing every American citizen with certain indefeasible rights expressed in language which was incontrovertibly clear. Upon the rights so conferred was reared the system of State and Federal Government. Consequently, any individual or corporation could dispute the power of any authority, either statutory or legislative, which in any way interfered with their inherent rights as American citizens. A large—if not the larger—proportion of the appeals to the Supreme Court originated from individuals or corporations. Thus the friction, jealousy and resentment necessarily arising from controversy between Federal and State Governments were largely mitigated by their becoming merged in less inflammatory disputations. Under the Home Rule Bill, owing to the total lack of a written constitution, whenever a difference of opinion arose between the British and the Irish Parliaments, it must partake more or less of the character of an international dispute—two Parliaments in collision, two antagonistic nations behind it; and I think Mr. Phelps added that he did not believe that the Home Rule scheme would stand the test of twelve months' working.

Phelps's criticism only endorsed what all Unionists

from the first have said, that all schemes for Home Rule so far put forward are paper schemes which not only cannot work in practice, but are so flimsy and inept in their conception that they cannot withstand criticism. Thus the unsparing and wholesale closure of debate is a necessary concomitant of a Home Rule Bill. It cannot stand discussion; but for the reputation of those who introduce it, it must be represented as a workable scheme and shoved upon the Statute Book as such. The political party who thus carry Home Rule buy the Irish Nationalist vote at the price of a disruption of the Empire: the party payment is received at once; the penalty for its encashment has to be borne by posterity.

We have become so accustomed to unworkable Home Rule Bills being shoved through Parliament by hook or by crook that the public does not realise the full iniquity of such transactions. These Bills are not ordinary legislative measures which can be amended, altered or repealed by the legislature passing them, if in practice they prove unworkable and mischievous. They purport to be a solemn international contract between two nations, the junior contracting party having, previous to signing the contract, been recognised as a distinct and separate nationality in order that they might become accredited signatories. This contract cannot in any way be altered except by consent of both nationalities. From the absence of any written constitution of any kind in this country, the Home Rule Bill is an attempt to evolve a written constitution out of unwritten practice and tradition—a task almost impossible in itself, even if time, experience and investigation were given to the elucidation of the mass of problems

of every kind which it raises. No attempt at any such examination has ever been made by the Radical Party. Gladstone suddenly at a moment's notice started the chimera of Home Rule subject to Imperial Parliament without making any effort whatever in advance to solve and elucidate the difficulties he raised. For partisan reasons the mass of his followers took his lead, not having the courage to tell him or the country the chimerical nature of the schemes they were foisting upon the public. A true patriot, if convinced that Home Rule was an unavoidable necessity, would have shaped his course very differently. Whilst announcing the goal for which he was striving, he would have pointed out the obstacles which had first to be overcome and declined to move until he could put forward plans for surmounting them. All the debates upon Home Rule to which I have listened have been make-believe discussions. The closure and the passage by watertight compartments of unworkable propositions took the place of debate and analysis of the schemes before the House. I will give an illustration.

The forces of the Crown were to be outside the control and cognisance of the Irish Parliament, and a clause forbidding legislation upon such subjects *was in the Bill*. *I pointed out that if the prohibition was intended to be really effective it should apply to resolutions as well as legislation.* With the whole power of the executive behind it, the Irish Parliament could by resolution stop all recruiting for the Imperial Forces. I therefore moved to make the restriction applicable to resolutions as well as to legislation. Gladstone became very angry; he charged me with incurable distrust of the proposed new Irish Parliament—so much so that I would not even allow

them, if hereafter we won a great battle such as the Battle of Waterloo, to congratulate England upon the achievement. His contention, nonsensical as it was, was supported by the usual mechanical majority. The power to interfere with recruiting for Imperial purposes and to upset the whole military system in Ireland was, in spite of his declaration to the contrary, to be given to the Irish Parliament.

Debates carried on under such conditions raise a spirit of resentment amongst those closed which daily obtains fresh momentum. It is difficult to treat with consideration or even courtesy arguments and statements that bear on their face the stamp of insincerity and bad faith, but when a process of this kind is in operation for discussing a scheme upon which the whole civil, religious and Imperial rights of a large population akin to us in race, religion and policy depend, the strain on temper becomes unendurable. The debates become more and more acrid and angry, and, the closure being applied with more and more severity, the maintenance of order inside the House becomes more and more difficult.

At the commencement of the session the Government made a great mistake in their selection of the Chairman of Ways and Means. Mr. (afterwards Lord) Courtney had discharged the duties of that office with great ability in the preceding Parliament. He was not popular with our men. From his ultra-conscientiousness he was much stricter in his application of the rules of order and debate to the Unionist side than he was to the Home Rule Party. Still, notwithstanding this tendency, his strength of character, intellect and adaptability to unforeseen difficulties were generally recognised, but he was

a Unionist, so he was put on one side for a respectable Radical lawyer. This gentleman, though well-meaning, was wholly unsuited to the task imposed upon him, and the Committee under his chairmanship became more and more rowdy and unmanageable. On the last night of the Bill in Committee a very discreditable row broke out, ending in personal encounter between certain members. It arose in this way.

The Committee was very noisy, and on both sides remarks, generally of a provocative character, were made. Amongst the Radical party was a member named L—, not at all a bad fellow, but very excitable, a born bruiser and when excited apt to be dangerous. He was on the rampage that night, looking out for a quarrel. Something Carson said infuriated him, and he ran to the Front Opposition Bench evidently with the intention of striking him, but at the critical moment he forebore to strike, and instead precipitated himself upon an already well-packed bench. Two men behind him tried to push him off, and the Irish members below the gangway, seeing a scuffle, jumped up *en masse* and in their hurry to get to the scrimmage tumbled over one another, falling upon Unionist members in their seats. One of them landed on the top of Saunderson's hat. Those so assaulted naturally pushed off their assailants, but, so far as I know, no blow was struck. As soon as anything like order was re-established, Speaker Peel was sent for. His majestic figure, his splendid voice and inherent dignity of demeanour almost instantaneously overawed the tumult; the disputants, when asked to explain, became like naughty schoolboys before a headmaster, so apologetic and deprecatory was their defence. Order was

not only restored, but a feeling of shame and contrition filled the whole Chamber.

Gladstone was terribly upset. He must have had an innate consciousness that the origin of this unseemly row was due to the tactics adopted by his Government. This transaction, coming as it did at the tail of unparalleled closure over the House, brought general discredit upon the Government, and though the third reading was carried in the House of Commons by 301 to 276, the Bill, when taken up to the Lords, was thrown out by 419 to 41. This smashing majority only represented the feeling of the country. The Bill, from the day of its introduction, had steadily receded in popularity. The impracticability of its provisions, the insincerity of the declarations as to the supremacy of Parliament and the futility of the machinery for their enforcement had so impressed the existing electorate that for twenty years no Government ventured to propose a similar Bill. When a Home Rule Bill next made its appearance, as it did in 1910, it was brought forward not because it was required or could be made workable in Ireland, but as a bargain between the Radical Party and the Irish Nationalists. The latter, if they had voted according to their convictions, would have thrown out the Budget of the former Party, so the Radicals induced the Irish to vote for what they did not like, the price paid being the disruption of Great Britain and Ireland and the break-up of the Constitution of England. By a just Nemesis both political organisations which were party to this nefarious transaction are now politically defunct.

Carson not long ago in the House of Commons traversed the allegation that the union with Ireland had failed from its inherent defects. He asserted,

and with force, that if it had been left alone it would have succeeded; but it was the venality of the English Radicals and their bid for Irish votes when in a Parliamentary minority that upset its satisfactory working. Whenever the Radicals had a majority independent of the Irish, Home Rule disappeared into the background. It only came to the front when they could not obtain office otherwise. The price for Home Rule votes had to be paid by Ulster, who was to be sold into political bondage in order that Radicals might sit in Downing Street.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE Home Rule Bill being rejected by this overwhelming majority in the House of Lords, the question then arose—what would its progenitor do? Would he sit still under the rebuff, or would he appeal to the country against it? Lobby gossip is seldom thoroughly reliable, but in this instance subsequent facts tended to confirm the report that Gladstone did wish to appeal to the constituencies, but that his colleagues were practically unanimous against so suicidal a course. Towards the close of the year gossip was again active as to Gladstone's retirement, and a curious confirmation of this rumour came to my ears which at the time I dismissed as mere tittle-tattle, but which has since proved itself to be quite correct.

Gladstone could not resist his old besetting failing—a love of scamping Naval Estimates. At the instance of Balfour and Chamberlain I put down in December 1893 a notice amounting to a vote of censure on the Government for their naval policy. At that time my eldest son was reading for the Foreign Office, and amongst others in his class was a son of Lord Acton, one of Gladstone's closest and most intimate friends. Quite casually my son said to me one day, "By the bye, young Acton says that the notice you have given upon Naval Estimates will drive Gladstone out of office and that he will retire in the next three weeks." I thought no more

about this prediction, though Gladstone did retire early in February next year, for it was always assumed that he went on account of his failing sight and health. Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, draws a pathetic picture of his Cabinet imploring him, in spite of his defects, to stay on and still guide them. "His colleagues carried almost to importunity their appeals to him to stay, to postpone what one of them called and many of them truly felt to be the moment of anguish" (see page 509, vol. iii, Morley's *Life of Gladstone*).

In 1917 Morley published another book, entitled *Recollections and Diaries*. In this publication (pp. 1-10, vol. ii) an entirely different version of Gladstone's retirement is given at length. He was made to resign by his colleagues, and Morley was the mouth-piece of this ultimatum. But the most significant part of the narrative of these daily diaries is the admission that although Gladstone was to go, his resignation was not to be associated with curtailment on Naval Estimates, as "that would wreck the Party." I propose to quote largely from these diaries, as they are so extraordinarily interesting, not only in the new and accurate light they give of Gladstone's exodus as a politician, but upon the admission involuntarily made by the diarist himself of the strength of popular feeling upon the maintenance of a strong Navy. So strong was this feeling that Morley, although he disapproved of the proposed increase in the Naval Estimates, hesitated to resign. Such a resignation must, in his judgment, wreck the Party.

The great additions made to the electorate by the Reform Bill of 1884 had, to a large extent, swamped the old niggardly and skinflint policy of the Man-

chester School. It is true that the mass of the recently enfranchised escaped direct taxation out of which new burdens of expenditure were mainly defrayed ; but, independently of this personal consideration, the wage-earning classes are very proud of the Navy, and they have an instinctive belief that without such adequate naval insurance the supplies of food and raw material from over the seas upon which they depend would in times of emergency be seriously imperilled, in which case they would, to a large extent, become wageless and foodless. What, however, they did require before embarking upon large Naval Estimates was some assurance that the extra expenditure, if sanctioned, would be effective. The great reforms in dockyard and naval administration effected by Salisbury's Government gave them that guarantee. I was compelled to speak in many places in the country in support of the Naval Defence Act, and I was agreeably surprised to find how popular were its provisions ; but this promise of support was conditional and associated with and dependent upon a good return. I doubt if Gladstone and his colleagues were fully cognisant of this change in public feeling. He certainly was not, and thought he could still, by the mere *ipse dixit* of a Prime Minister, force the Admiralty to accept decisions of which they disapproved.

The year 1893 was one of active naval propaganda. France and Russia were now firmly cemented in alliance, and Russia, in response to this close feeling of amity, proposed to embark on a very large programme of capital-ship building. Anyone who has studied the naval war map of the world is aware that the geographical positions of France and Russia

are such as to give them, if in alliance, distinct geographical advantages for naval purposes against the British Empire. To counteract these strategical advantages it was necessary for us to keep the great bulk of our fleet in distant waters; in fact, a satisfactory strategical position could only be secured in certain stations by keeping there a local superiority of force.

The Naval Estimates for 1893-4 were not satisfactory. In substitution for two capital battleships which the late Government proposed to build, two big cruisers were suggested, large in size but only gunned with a secondary armament. Lord Hood of Avalon, who for many years had been associated with me at the Admiralty and who was the highest living expert upon the relative strengths of the navies of the world, in a very impressive speech in the House of Lords in the month of May pointed out the necessity of enlarging our programme if the standard of strength recently laid down was to be maintained, and Salisbury later on, at a great meeting at Ormskirk, urged the same policy. Outside the Houses of Parliament an active propaganda went on. I wrote an article for a well-known periodical—on the strength of the Navy, in which I showed that if our Fleet was to be maintained at the level of the two-power standard we unquestionably must largely increase our Estimates; and I read another paper before the Royal Statistical Society which had a very wide circulation, entitled "Ocean Highways," in which I demonstrated the dependence of this country on the waterways of the world being kept open, not only for food supplies but for maintenance of the mass of national industries.

Inside the Admiralty the same feeling was sim-

mering. Admiral Sir Frederick Richards, a most determined administrator, had now become First Naval Lord, but though a good writer, he was not gifted with any power of speech. It was known that in the autumn of 1893 he had pressed large demands upon Spencer, his civilian Chief, amounting, as was subsequently shown, to £3,126,000. Richards had the unpleasant knack in argument of always repeating over and over again the same words and figures. In an interview which he had with Lord Spencer lasting for two hours it was stated that the only words he used were £3,126,000. Lord Spencer offered him a million, then two million, then three million ; to each and every offer the reply was £3,126,000. Richards had his naval colleagues with him. If he resigned, they went too ; and if all went, Spencer could not stay on. It was, therefore, with a general knowledge of what was going on both inside and outside the Admiralty that in the month of December I gave notice of the following motion :

“ That in the opinion of this House it is necessary for the maintenance of the security of the country and the continued protection of British interests and commerce that a considerable addition should at once be made to the Navy. This House therefore calls on his Majesty’s Government to make before the Christmas recess a statement of their intention in order that immediate action may be taken thereon.”

I knew that Gladstone was to follow me, and in making my speech upon this motion I was extremely moderate, kept well within the facts and converted my statement into the form of a proposition of Euclid. It was dull, but it was quite unanswerable.

Gladstone had nothing to say except to appeal to old traditions and to rake up old theories and ideas, which, to his great surprise, elicited little response.

Both Chamberlain and Dilke spoke very effectively on behalf of my proposals. What saved the Government was a speech by Harcourt. Harcourt had taken a great interest in the Navy, and his views, so far as I could gather, were both sound and advanced; but he did not like to argue against his chief. He, however, informed the House that he had been in consultation with the Naval Lords and that they were satisfied with the present expenditure. This assertion reassured the House, and the Government maintained a majority of 36, viz. 240 against 204, upon my motion.

Next day there was a rumour—which subsequently turned out to be true—that the Naval Lords wholly repudiated the interpretation which Harcourt had put upon their views and that they had threatened to resign *en masse* unless he publicly repudiated the statement he had made. Harcourt extricated himself with great skill out of the difficulty in which he had placed himself. To do him justice, all he had done was to put too favourable an interpretation upon the replies to certain leading questions which he had put to the Naval Lords, but this incident created an unpleasant and hostile feeling towards the Government. The impression outside the immediate entourage of the Government was that the House had not been fairly dealt with as regards naval expenditure and that a division had been snatched by a misrepresentation of facts.

Morley's diaries now take up the story. All that I am about to quote will be found in pages 1 to 10, vol. ii. The Cabinet situation is thus described:

"When the Bill met its fate its author began silently to revolve the question of his own continuance in command. A sharp controversy within the Cabinet brought the question to an issue. Naval Estimates were proposed by Lord Spencer. The Prime Minister judged them to be grossly excessive. The Admiralty was urgent, and Spencer was by temperament obstinate. He carried a decided majority of the Cabinet with him. Time passed, a series of singular perplexities ensued" (p. 1.)

"We had a Cabinet on January 9th, 1894. Accommodation on Navy Estimates seeming to be out of reach, was the decision on the ulterior consequence of the fact capable of delay? Could this be postponed till February 15th? It was decided to adjourn, and we were informally to consider these points amongst others" (p. 1).

"The view undoubtedly was that now is the accepted time for our Chief's resignation, that it would be against Mr. Gladstone's honour to remain at the head of the Government whilst the Estimates of which he disapproved were actually being framed."

"Much buzzing amongst the Cabinet, men coming to my room and talking things over and over. Most of them were at this stage of affairs—"this-weekers" and not "next-monthers," *i.e.* for a definite Cabinet on Thursday or Friday followed by the Prime Minister's immediate retirement" (pp. 4, 5, and 6).

Morley goes to dine in Downing Street and delivers the ultimatum :

"After dinner in the drawing-room Gladstone at once sat down to backgammon with Armistead.

Mrs. Gladstone then carried me to a sofa behind an ornamental glass screen, and I then found with a minute of consternation that I was to tell her the fatal news. Mr. Gladstone had said to her on his return from the House that I was going to dine, that he was fagged, and I would tell her how things stood. It was as painful as any talk could be. However, I had no choice. I told her that the reign was over, and the only question was whether the abdication should be now or in February. The poor lady was not in the least prepared for the actual stroke. Had gone through so many crises, and they had all come out right in the end; had calculated that the refreshment of the coming journey to Biarritz would change his thoughts and purpose. I told her that language had been used which made change almost impossible. Well, then, would not the Cabinet change when they knew the perils with which his loss would surround them? I was obliged to keep to iron facts. What a curious scene! The breaking to her that the pride and glory of her life was at last to face eclipse, that the curtain was falling on a grand drama of fame, power and acclamation: the rattle of the dice on the backgammon board, and the laughter and chuckling of the two long-lived players sounding a strange running refrain.

This, however, was not the end. The final stage did not arrive for several weeks. Three or four he spent at Biarritz (viz. January 13th to February 14th) with little gain of composure."

On February 1st Sir Algernon West made the following communication from Biarritz:

"The statement that Mr. Gladstone has definitely decided, or has decided at all, on resigning office is untrue. It is true that for many months past his age and the condition of his sight and hearing have, in his judgment, made relief from public care de-

sirable, and that accordingly his tenure of office has been at any moment liable to interruption from these causes, in their nature permanent. It remains exactly as it has been. He is ignorant of the course which events important to the nation may take even during the remainder of the present session, and he has not said or done anything which could in any degree restrain his absolute freedom and that of his colleagues with regard to the performance of arduous duties now lying or likely to be before him."

Morley's diary continues :

"I came back from Ireland to meet him on his return from Biarritz. He revived the idea of a speedy dissolution. I said I was against it" (pp. 6 and 7).

Now follows this curious but involuntary admission. Opposition to an increase of Naval Estimates would be so unpopular in the country that it would wreck the Party associated with such restrictions. Morley's diary deals thus with this awkward fact :

"About my own position I put it plainly once more in this way : 'I stay because if I were to resign on ships, you would have to resign on ships too, and that would wreck the Party. If I resign on ships, you cannot resign on eyes and ears ; but that is what exactly, to save the Party, you desired to do. Therefore on Irish grounds I stay.' " (p. 7).

A curious non sequitur !

"A fortnight of curious interludes came next. There was a Cabinet dinner on the 17th February. It was expected that the Prime Minister would tell

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us that he was going to resign at once, on what day, what he was going to say, and what we were to set about doing or not doing. . . . We ate our dinners expectantly : the coffee found the oracle still dumb, and in good time a crestfallen flock departed."

" Six days later (February 23rd) a Cabinet, and at the close of the business he said in a quiet ordinary voice something to the effect that when the Prorogation Speech was settled it was understood that the moment was come to ' end his co-operation with the members of the Cabinet ' " (p. 9).

It is needless to say that when Mr. Gladstone did retire he did so with all that dignity and self-control of which he was so consummate a master ; but there was not a word said by him or by any of his colleagues which in any way indicated what was the real cause of his retirement from office. The comment one would make on these diaries is : If Morley approved of Gladstone's opposition to the Navy Estimates, why was he the member of the Cabinet authorised to tell him that he must retire ? And why, if he retired, did not Morley retire too ? No public man in my day more sedulously courted public opinion or kept his eye more closely upon it than did Gladstone. It is curious that he should altogether have failed to note the great change which had taken place as regards the maintenance of adequate naval establishments ; but I assume he was so wedded to and obsessed by the economical theories to which he had so long given expression that he could not believe that the very foundation of his financial policy had been inverted. Those, however, of his younger and less self-opinionated differ- or they would have the extreme

measure of sending an ultimatum to so distinguished a chief.

Looking at the episode as a whole, I think one may excuse the efforts made by Gladstone's colleagues to conceal from the public the true facts connected with his resignation. It was a piece of political camouflage carried out to secure an honourable exit from public life of a great chief who had so often led them to victory.

Gladstone's exodus from the House of Commons, in my opinion, deprived that assembly of its greatest charm. In common with most of his political opponents, I disliked at times his political methods and vagaries, but to watch him at work was most fascinating. His resilience, assurance, inimitable histrionic and forensic gifts always secured for his audience on any really difficult task a display of the highest intellectual and artistic gifts. His mercurial temperament was such that you could never foresee or accurately anticipate the occasion or the cause of these superlative exhibitions. So long as he was there, he was the magnetic centre of every discussion or controversy. At times there was no fly too small at which he might not rise, but the thrower of the fly would soon learn that he had not only hooked a big fish but a fish that would certainly break him. Up to the end this game went on, a marvellous exhibition of responsive vitality in an advanced octogenarian. There was also a moral lesson which throughout his whole career he preached and practised and which the House of Commons of late years has to some extent ignored. Whatever office he held or whatever parliamentary work he undertook, into it he put his whole being. He would have scorned, possessed though he was of an incredible

power of speech, to rely on that power and not on a thorough and accurate study in advance of the questions with which he had to deal. No man took more trouble by assiduous labour to prepare himself for public or Parliamentary work. No man could struggle harder than he did to master the details and ramifications of the measures he proposed, and he expected all his colleagues and subordinates to do the same. He set a standard of devotion to Parliamentary duties and to public service that acted and reacted right throughout the House of Commons so long as he was alive. Subsequent leaders have not been so self-sacrificing. Dialectic skill, smart debate points, have been substituted for sound knowledge and previous preparation. Is it to be wondered at that those who have attempted to substitute this counterfeit currency for the gold standard of the past find themselves sinking and not rising in the estimate of the public they wish to influence ?

CHAPTER XXV

THE selection of a successor to Gladstone was exceptionally difficult, not merely from the huge gap to be filled, but from the dissensions amongst those who were eligible. Harcourt in Parliamentary aptitude and experience was head and shoulders above the rest of the Cabinet, but his aggressive demeanour and caustic tongue had so alienated certain of his colleagues that they would not accept him at any price. The choice ultimately lay between Spencer and Rosebery.

Gladstone, in spite of his differences on naval expenditure with the former, favoured his selection. Morley favoured Rosebery, and his choice was endorsed by a majority of the Cabinet. To be a success where Gladstone had failed, even under the most favourable conditions, was an almost impossible achievement, but, so far as Rosebery was concerned, the conditions under which he accepted the leadership were such as to banish any possibility of success. His bright and sarcastic powers of speech, his strong Imperial policy and Whig exclusiveness, did not endear him to the dour Manchester School politicians and pacifists who constituted the majority of the Cabinet. His ignorance of the House of Commons and the dominant influence Harcourt there exercised made any further difference between himself and his chief lieutenant a certain victory for the latter. From the moment his premiership started it was clear

that the Radical element in the Cabinet had made a great mistake in shunting Harcourt.

The session of 1894 was almost exclusively occupied by the great financial measures embodying a new and extended application of death duties. Harcourt steered this measure with consummate ability and patience through the House of Commons. The proposed legislation was litigious to the last degree and hit very hard the heirs to large fortunes ; yet this long, contentious, and complicated measure was carried through the House of Commons without a single application of the closure—a most remarkable performance and reflecting the highest credit upon Harcourt as a Parliamentary tactician. Yet he was subordinate to a young Whig peer and made so by the personal action of his colleagues.

In the autumn of 1894 a very acrimonious controversy sprang up in the London School Board as to the syllabus of religious education to be adopted in the London schools. Moderate men like myself, who knew that the so-called religious difficulty emanated almost entirely from influences outside the schools and was almost wholly political in its object, watched with great disapproval the resuscitation of this unprofitable contention. Two extremists were in command of the contending forces. Mr. Diggle, a very able speaker, generalised the Church Party, and Mr. Lyulph Stanley (afterwards Lord Sheffield), an educationist of exceptional experience but bitter to the last degree against Church teaching, became head of the militant Nonconformity. The fight was carried from the Council Chamber to the poll, and after an incredible amount of personal abuse and literature had been expended, the two parties emerged from the fray in almost equal

numbers—29 supporting Mr. Diggle and 26 adherents for Mr. Stanley.

I was suddenly and unexpectedly asked to allow my name to be put forward as a candidate for the chairmanship of the School Board, it being possible under the Statute to bring in an outsider as Chairman. I was reluctant to plunge into this cauldron of religious controversy, as I did not feel that I had either the aptitude or the knowledge requisite for the office offered me. I consulted Salisbury, and he strongly pressed me to comply with the request made. He seemed to think that I had an inherent wet-blanket element within me which would damp down the heat of the more violent of the protagonists. I was elected by a strict party majority of three. I made a moderate and strictly judicial speech before taking the chair, for the minority had spoken very bitterly against me. Almost at our first sitting Diggle, obviously wrong, appealed to me upon some point of procedure, and I at once decided against him. From that time onward I never had any difficulty or captious criticism from my opponents on the Board. They loyally supported me whenever they could, and when I resigned a year later both sides were equally considerate in their estimation of my conduct as chairman.

My previous estimate of the hollowness and insincerity of this controversy was confirmed by my subsequent experience. On both sides there was deplorable and unjustifiable exaggeration. The extreme Church Party maintained that School Board education in London was godless and irreligious, in spite of the fact that religious instruction on an admirably conceived syllabus was daily given in the schools. Political Nonconformity pretended that

the most extreme and narrow dogmas and doctrines of the Church of England, to the exclusion of the general tenets of religion, were taught in rate-supported schools, and the only proof they could produce in support of this wholesale indictment was the assertion of the Divine origin of the Founder of Christianity. A number of leading Nonconformists declined to pay rates on this plea; yet for many years past they had without protest allowed a Jewish syllabus of religion approved by the Chief Rabbi and taught by Jewish teachers to be part of the daily curriculum in Jewish schools maintained by rates. How is it possible in such circumstances to arrive at any conclusion other than this, that the motives of this agitation were political not religious, sectarian and not national? At the very moment that the inner civil life of London was turned upside-down by these fanatics, in the neighbouring borough of Acton, which was part of my constituency, a most sensible and different programme was being enacted.

The population there was increasing by leaps and bounds, and the school accommodation, including voluntary schools, was wholly insufficient. These voluntary schools were under the control of a number of broad-minded clergy, and they said to the local School Board: "Let us come in and form part of the local supply of schools. We will lease our schools to you, reserving one hour or more a day for religious instruction, and you shall appoint and control all the teachers of such schools." The suggestion worked admirably. There was only one case in a long series of years of any teacher declining to give the religious instruction required in these schools. Nonconformists' and Churchmen's children alike attended them. The boys in one family might go

to a Board School and the girls to a Church school, or vice versa, yet so harmonious was the whole working of this experiment that when the Chairman of the School Board was appointed to be Bishop of Bombay the vacancy was filled by a leading Non-conformist minister. Gladstone more than once expressed his high appreciation of the conduct of this School Board, and he was supposed to have stated that they deserved to have a statue in solid gold put up to their memory.

The two impressions which I took away with me when my chairmanship of the School Board terminated were the inordinate time the School Board contrived to waste in transacting their business, and secondly, the very poor educational return obtained on the expenditure sanctioned. The whole procedure of the School Board was dilatory to the last degree. The Chief Committee was composed of the whole Board, fifty-five in number. Whenever a vacancy for a headmaster or a headmistress occurred, it was competent for anybody on the Board to bring forward the name for the vacancy of any teacher who was qualified. Hours were wasted, the merits of the respective candidates being descanted upon by their supporters. When the vacancy had been filled, and another occurred a week afterwards, the School Board went through exactly the same programme. This is only one illustration of the waste of time running through the whole procedure. It is a significant feature of democratic administration that suspicion underlies the whole transaction of business. Nobody seems disposed to trust anybody else. Neither the officials nor the chairmen of the Committees were given adequate power. If it was proposed to give half a crown extra to any employee of one part of

London for exceptional work, the matter was discussed and rediscussed, and unless the advance was made general, no matter what the capacity of the individual for whom the increased remuneration was originally proposed, it would be rejected, and members were proud of this performance, as it showed that they stood up for the rights of their individual constituencies.

The School Board sat for the greater part of the week and for a good many hours a day. This consumption of time placed upon the majority of members a strain which they could not well stand. In the much more extended investigations which a few years later I had to make as Chairman of the Poor Law Commission into the general local administration of the country, I found exactly the same phenomena in every branch of administration—a dislike to give adequate authority to either chairman or officials. Consequently, the whole local administrative machine was creaking from overstrain. Whenever it was proposed to add any further duties to those performed by the existing authorities, they asserted that they had not the time to give attention to them and a new special authority for this purpose must be created. Yet in other countries one municipality or one local authority transacts—and effectively transacts—a far greater variety of duties than is the practice in Great Britain.

My experience forces me to the conclusion that unless local authorities largely increase the numbers and authority of their officials or co-opt from outside persons of administrative experience and authority, our system of local administration will break down, or at any rate become so deadlocked as to force the community to have recourse to

much more bureaucratic or autocratic methods of administration.

Ever since Elementary Education became nationalised its cost has steadily and continuously risen. No reasonable public man could object to such an increasing outlay if it were associated with corresponding educational results. Can anyone pretend, even the most enthusiastic educationist, that such is the case? Forster, in introducing his Education Scheme in 1870, calculated that the rate might be threepence in the £: it is at present in many localities at least two shillings, and rising. Our present Education Minister, who by profession and experience is a very high authority upon scholastic questions, has introduced a general scheme the cost of which from taxes alone will be over fifty millions a year. Adding the increased and continuous burdens simultaneously imposed upon the rates, the total burden laid upon the community will be little short of £100,000,000 annually. It is an expenditure far in excess of what any other European nation either incurs or contemplates. Whatever be the fault or failing of our system, it certainly is not parsimony, nor can it be said that our teachers are inefficient or apathetic. My own personal experience of the teachers (though I admit it is perfunctory and intermittent) points to the very opposite conclusion. They are very keen about their work, and most of them thoroughly competent. If, then, our educational failure is not due to lack of funds or want of ability and energy on the part of the teachers, it must be the system and the curriculum based upon the system that are in default.

I was for five years Chairman of the Commission upon the administration of the Poor Law, and in the

course of our enquiries we had to gauge the cost contributing to or warding off unemployment and indigence. We accumulated an enormous mass of evidence taken from every class and from all schools of thought, and the overwhelming consensus of this vast mass of testimony was very condemnatory of existing educational methods. The summary and conclusion of the Commission upon this part of their enquiries were thus epitomised (Part IX, para. 128):

“ Before we leave the subject of education we must refer to one criticism that has been made with almost absolute unanimity. There seems to be outside the circle of the teaching profession a very strong general feeling that the education of our children in elementary schools is not of the kind which is helpful to them in after-life. Education is the accepted antidote to unemployment and pauperism. The cost of elementary education in this country in 1905-6 was twenty million sterling. This is almost entirely a new national charge since 1870. It should have steadily reduced unemployment and diminished pauperism. If it has failed in this, its accepted mission, it cannot be said that the failure is due to lack of funds. The desire of the young to raise themselves in the social scale and improve their position should ever be encouraged, but this desire seems to us too frequently to take the shape of trying to avoid handicraft and manual labour by recourse to other occupations which, though associated with a black coat, are less remunerative and less progressive than skilled handiwork. Clerical labour is a glut upon the market; high-class artisans are, according to our evidence, at times obtained with difficulty. We doubt if the atmosphere of our school life is altogether congenial to a career of manual labour. We would suggest to the Board of Education the advisability of meeting these criticisms by

a thorough reconsideration of the time-table and curriculum in our elementary schools as well as of the aims and ideals of elementary education. Though employers of labour may perhaps be apt to look at questions too much from their own standpoint, still, the unanimity of opinion that our school curriculum does not supply the right class of instruction and training for industrial purposes cannot lightly be put on one side."

It was noteworthy that in the prolonged and almost ubiquitous investigations of public institutions we found that the young women trained in our elementary schools as a rule could neither sew nor cook. The first principle governing education should be that the subjects taught to children be chosen and regulated by the time the child is at school. Of all systems of instruction the most vicious and expensive is that in which an ambitious course is truncated before the child has such a grip of the subjects taught as to be able to remember or utilise them in after-life. The system of payment by results tended to make the children's education remunerative to the school but jejune to the child. Thanks to the late Sir Robert Morant, this mischievous principle has in the main been eliminated from our education system. Now, by abolishing half-timers, by raising the limit of age, by diminishing the size of the classes and encouraging continuation in higher-grade schools, and by facilitating entrance into Universities it is hoped that the subjects taught may be so gripped by the young as to be remembered and utilised by them in their subsequent practical life. But the expense of the experiment is tremendous, and one can only hope that the community at large may receive in improved industrial and inventive work

some return for the very heavy and increasing cost they have for so long a period been asked to bear.

The work of Chairman of the London School Board brought me much closer into the inner life, aims and difficulties of the wage-earning class than my previous offices, and it was very pleasant to know how in the poorer parts of London a well-regulated school under a kindly headmaster became recreative as well as an educational centre. In this respect there were a great many functions to attend, and I found my time very fully occupied by the engagements a Chairman was expected to undertake.

One evening I got home late, and about 1.30 a.m. there was an insistent knocking at my door. On opening it I found Lord Cranborne (the present Marquess of Salisbury) was my visitor. He said: "Excuse my coming so late, but my father sent me to find you upon an urgent matter, and as you were not in the House of Commons I came on here. There was a meeting of the Unionist leaders to-day at which my father, Chamberlain, Balfour, Goschen and James were present, and on the instigation of James it was settled that the adjournment of the House should be moved to-morrow on the question of raising the customs duties on cotton in India. It was believed by James that all the Lancashire members would support him, he being a Lancashire member, and the Government might in consequence be put in a minority. Since this decision was arrived at, Balfour has been suddenly attacked by influenza, and as you are the only person on our Front Bench who knows anything about these duties, my father wishes you to take charge of the debate and sum up on our side."

Nearly the whole of my next day had been mapped

out for me in advance in connection with education work, and some of these duties I could not transfer ; but I felt that I must, in the circumstances, accept this request from my Chief. I said that I would go down early next morning and see him on the subject. Fortunately, on my table there was a Blue Book just issued by the India Office, reporting the details of the proposed taxation. I read this rapidly before I went to bed, and my old knowledge of the subject came back to me quickly.

The cotton duties imposed in India upon Lancashire piece-goods raised a radical issue in a subtle but acute form. Lancashire is naturally in favour of the free import of these goods into India. India is equally strong in wishing to curtail such imports by protective duties. Each side has cogent arguments in support of its contentions. Each has great political influences at its back. Lancashire puts pressure upon the House of Commons to adopt the same fiscal principles in India as it maintains at home. India puts pressure upon its Government to encourage the expansion of a growing national industry by preferential or protective treatment. Salisbury, when Secretary of State for India, got rid of this venomous controversy by the abolition of the duties. They brought in a small revenue, and alterations in other directions enabled us to dispense with them without imposing new taxation.

In 1894 the Indian Government was hard up, owing to the fall in the value of silver, which necessitated the transmission to England of an increased number of rupees or their equivalent to meet gold obligations. They proposed to reimpose (but in another form) taxation upon Lancashire piece-goods. The Government, being ardent supporters of the

Manchester school of economy, repudiated all idea of protection. Revenue without protection was their only object, and they made the preamble to their legislation a declaration that if it could be shown that their proposals were in any direction protective, the protective element would at once be eliminated.

I tried in vain to see Salisbury and the other Unionist leaders, but they were all away from home, except Balfour, who was ill in bed. I could not get to the House till late, but I heard enough of James's speech to realise that he had not mastered the elementary features and dangers of the controversy. His speech was one of the worst, considering the reputation of the speaker, I ever heard made. He laid down on behalf of Lancashire dangerous and untenable pretensions over Indian taxation. He imputed personal and mercenary motives to Indian mill-owners ; in fact, he left unsaid all that he ought to have said, and said what he ought not to have said. Fowler, who was Secretary of State for India, quite rightly pounced upon James, and in a very fine speech not only traversed and refuted his extravagant contentions, but he also made an effective appeal to the House to stand by him as Minister for India in protecting the far-away interests committed to his charge against the greed and rapacity of interested British manufacturers. The speech made a great impression upon the House—so much so that Goschen, who had been a party to James's motion, got up afterwards and threw himself in an impassioned speech upon Fowler's side. Knowing that I was to sum up, he talked to me before he spoke, saying that he only wished to say a few words and nothing that would embarrass me in my summing up ; but he

was carried away by his emotion and went much further than he had intended.

Fine as was Fowler's speech so far as the actual points in contention were concerned, he had delivered himself into my hands. He had repudiated all idea of protection, going so far as to say that he would at once repeal any portion of his scheme tainted by this blemish. His scheme was to impose a 5 per cent. customs duty upon all cloth above a certain fineness of cotton and to counteract this by a 5 per cent. internal duty upon all yarn in India of the same fineness. In the one case the duty was levied upon the full value of the manufactured cloth; in the other upon the value only of the unwoven yarn, and the difference was very substantial. Fowler was therefore bound, in the terms of his speech, to rescind the scheme which so clearly violated the fundamental condition he had laid down. We had a poor division and a still worse Press, but within less than a year Fowler's duties were abolished and an even tax of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was levied on all cloth above a certain fineness, whether foreign or native.

Although certain Indian millowners objected, the substituted scheme worked well on a basis of perfect equality. For reasons which I will subsequently explain I became, upon the break-up of Rosebery's Government, Fowler's successor as Secretary of State for India; but this appointment was in no way caused by my speech, although my Radical opponents were kind enough to attribute the heavy beating they got in Lancashire in the election of 1895 to the bribe the Secretary of State for India (as I then was) had in this debate most improperly offered to the cotton industries of Great Britain.

Before leaving this question it may be worth

noting the extraordinary quickness and facility with which any highly organised industry such as the cotton trade adapts itself and utilises for its own advantage a differential system of custom duties. To get inside the tariff without paying and thus obtain the higher price by substituted goods becomes at once the object upon which the manufacturer concentrates his attention. The law or principle of substitution, if cleverly worked, effects wonders ; that is to say, an article is made to look like and sold as the taxed article, but is composed of untaxed raw materials. My own personal experience of this operation was given in a speech of May 18th, 1896, by which time differential duties were abolished :

“ The experiment was tried in India in 1878 of drawing a line through cotton goods, taxing cloth above a certain quality of fineness and exempting those below this quality of fineness. The result was astonishing. Before this experiment was made the free goods imported from England amounted to 9,000,000 yards, the amount of duty-paid goods being 350,000,000 yards. In the first year of the change the duty-paid goods fell to 323,000,000 yards and the duty-free goods rose to 99,000,000 yards. In the subsequent year the duty-paid goods fell to 164,000,000 yards and the duty-free goods rose to 360,000,000 yards.”

I commend this experience to all those who wish to build up our Imperial trade on differential principles. I do not contend that it cannot be done, but the principle in practice is a double-edged weapon and requires the most detailed and thorough investigation before it can be adopted with safety.

Reverting to the session of 1895, upon the Address Chamberlain moved an amendment and was only

beaten by 14—297 against, 283 for. The Parnellites voted against the Government, and this political declaration on their part made the Government's tenure of office more precarious than before.

At the beginning of this year Randolph Churchill, whose long illness had prepared the public for the worst, passed away quietly, though he had made an heroic fight against a fatal disease. Right throughout the year 1894 he endeavoured to speak in the House and attend public meetings, and although in these efforts there were occasional gleams of the old ability, for the most part of his speeches he was inaudible if not incoherent. Both Harcourt and Balfour paid a fine and merited tribute to his rare ability and meteoric career. What a mystery and enigma is failure or success during life! Why should a gifted and talented man die a failure for the lack of some moral ballast? And why should a mediocre man, free from any glimpse or touch of genius, be a success and a benefit to his own and to future generations? Is it the possession of the ethical or the want of the intellectual gifts that creates this success? It may be that genius from its volition is less associated with character and common sense than mediocrity; but it seems a waste and a misuse of glorious human material that it should so often be sterile because it cannot be humdrum.

CHAPTER XXVI

THIS year's Naval Estimates showed an increase of £1,100,000 over the previous year's expenditure, which Gladstone had declined to sanction. With this indication of the trend of national policy and public opinion, the Cabinet were right a year back in hustling their Chief out of office. His retention must have resulted in a public breach between him and their policy tending to the disintegration both of the Government and the party behind it. Although the shipbuilding programme was enlarged, it was not embodied or stabilised by an Act of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker Peel having held his office for twelve years—a period of continuous Parliamentary tumult—not unnaturally felt the strain of his long tenure of the difficult combination of duties—judicial impartiality and the expedition of Government business. The conflict between these two obligations when new powers for the Chair are required to control increasing factiousness and *obstruction at times becomes acute*. The House of Commons cannot be allowed to degenerate into a bear-garden, yet it is the Opposition who benefits and the Government who suffers from such disorder and chaos. Every fresh rule and its enforcement is of help to the Government of the day and is intended so to operate. To help the Government is therefore the duty of a high judicial official, but any help so given must be in the guise of maintaining the dignity and decorum of the whole House. If a Speaker

once goes beyond such a justification, he becomes branded as a partisan and is liable to be tripped up in the subsequent interrogation which his action suggests. It is marvellous to note how the traditions of the Chair steady and guide successive Speakers, even although in previous posts they may have been strong adherents of one or another of the two parties between whom they have to adjudicate and interfere. No man ever had in this sense a more continuous and difficult task than Mr. Speaker Peel. Not unfrequently he had to restrain during Home Rule debates the ardour of his old Chief, Gladstone, but his presence, voice and power of speech were such that, stern as he was to recalcitrants and rowdy members, he never lost the respect of the overwhelming mass of the House. The Irish Nationalists were the party with whom he most came into collision, but his lofty impartiality and urbane consideration endeared him even to this section of the House, and their tribute to him upon his retirement was generous and genuine.

Mr. Gully, K.C., was selected by the Government as his successor, and his appointment was confirmed by a majority. It was a bold venture. He was a very young Member of Parliament, he had never spoken, and his attendance at the House was very fitful. Amongst his friends he had a high reputation for firmness and fair play, and his appearance, manner and voice were ideal. He knew little or nothing of the rules, procedure or precedents of the House of Commons. I believe, in the opinion of those proposing him, this was his chief recommendation. The rules of the House of Commons are the growth of centuries of practice; but the whole conditions of Parliament have so changed, even during the last two centuries, that the principles which the rules originally attempted

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to enforce have vanished or metamorphosed themselves beyond recognition. There is in consequence a multiplication of rules enshrouded in a mass of verbiage which makes the procedure for transacting business antiquated and absurd to the last degree. The born obstructionist makes it his first business to master, so far as he can, the so-called rules of debate, and with the knowledge thus obtained to thwart as much as possible any attempts at their simplification or improvement. It was, therefore, a great advantage to place in the chair a man of judicial mind, legal training and firmness who would be disposed to adapt and interpret the rules for the convenience of the House, instead of making the House the slave of bygone interpretations of obsolete regulations.

Mr. Speaker Gully fully realised the anticipations of his friends. He gradually got control of the House, and by his lucid and businesslike rulings he greatly accelerated the discharge of public business. It was a quieter House during his Speakership than that over which his predecessor presided. There were fewer scenes, less changes in the rules, fewer discussions on his rulings, but by tact, judgment and consistent rulings he improved to a marked degree the whole machinery of the House of Commons.

The session dribbled on, the Government becoming steadily weaker in the House and more unpopular in the country. I fancy the Cabinet Councils were the reverse of harmonious, and there undoubtedly was an antipathy between the Prime Minister and certain of his colleagues which constantly manifested itself. They were an unhappy family, anxious for some release from a position which gave them neither authority nor distinction. In a small House

they were beaten on an Army Vote by a majority of 5—132 to 127. It gave the Prime Minister the opportunity he wanted of escaping from his undignified position, and he resigned. Tactically the resignation was a fatal blunder ; he ought to have dissolved. It may be that he would have found it difficult to write any electioneering manifesto which his colleagues would accept, but to resign as he did gave us on the platform an unanswerable case. On what does a general election turn ? It is a question of popular confidence between the political parties appealing. Each should be able to say, Give us a majority, and we will show you how the country should be governed. But if one party has a majority and throws up the sponge on the plea that it cannot continue to govern, it puts an irresistible appeal and argument into the mouths of its opponents. That argument was repeated and enforced from every Unionist platform, and greatly affected those to whom it was addressed.

A few days before the polls I was walking home with George Wyndham, and, discussing the probable results of the impending election, he said, "I think we shall have a majority of 50." "It will be a great deal more," I said: "I put it at 150." It was a good shot ; we came back with a majority of 152.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE events of the past decade (it was then ten years since Gladstone hoisted the Home Rule flag) tended to bring the two sections of the Unionist Party into very close relations. Each supplied what the other wanted. The Liberal-Unionists were short of voting power, we of men of real governing capacity. Our two separate organisations, although they had withstood the dangers and depression of success and defeat and had ultimately emerged stronger and in closer touch than before, at times did not work satisfactorily together. Recurrent disputes as to the selection of candidates and the apportionment of individual seats had cropped up and had only been solved by the tact and intervention of the leaders. But in the framing of a policy, whether it was that of opposition or of promotion, I must say no such antagonism had occurred. On the contrary, in all such matters the two parties had moved and acted as one. In Lord Salisbury's last Cabinet Goschen was the only representative of the Liberal-Unionists. It was felt now that this was a very inadequate representation, and the overtures which Lord Salisbury made to Hartington, Chamberlain, Lansdowne and James to join the Government were heartily reciprocated, and arrangements were further made for a proportionate inclusion of Liberal-Unionists in the minor offices of the Ministry. The Cabinet thus formed was one of exceptional experi-

ence and ability. There were six men in it all of whom were personally qualified or capable of filling the post of Prime Minister—Salisbury, Devonshire, Goschen, Beach, Balfour and Chamberlain. It is rare, if not unprecedented, to have so much proved ability in the Ministry. In the past "Governments of All the Talents," as they were dubbed, there was plenty of ability, but it had never before been associated with such a practical experience of men and matters.

This advent in force of Liberal-Unionists into the Cabinet so reduced the higher appointments available for the Toryside of the Coalition that I quite expected to be left out, unless I went back to my old post at the Admiralty. To my surprise, the *Gazette* suddenly announced the appointment of Goschen to be head of that office. As I had done all the work of representing during Opposition the naval policy of the Unionist Party, and as Goschen, who was my most intimate friend, had never whispered to me any wish to become First Lord of the Admiralty again, I was taken aback at this announcement. Meeting Salisbury the day after this announcement, he told me to come and see him next day. He wanted me to be in his new administration, but he added: "Goschen has taken away your birthright by declining any office other than that of the Admiralty." When I next saw Salisbury, he asked me to go to the India Office. This, next to the Admiralty, was the post I most fancied, as I had been so well grounded in Indian questions through my long tenure of office as Under-Secretary. On my first contact with Goschen I asked him why he had never let me know that he wanted to go back to the Admiralty. He evaded a direct answer, but said in his friendliest

way : " I have done you a good service ; it is much better for you to go to a new office than to go back to your old groove of daily work." The truth was that Goschen, with his keen instinct, foresaw that there must be sooner or later a row between Chamberlain and the Birmingham fiscal school and the free-trade policy of the Treasury. He did not want to be a leading protagonist in this coming controversy. Goschen was too good a fellow and too true a friend to quarrel with, and we soon resumed our old cordial relations. He was then very blind and could not distinguish a face across a broad table. It is impossible for a civilian First Lord who is blind to be a thorough success, and this Goschen and his Naval Lords soon found. Still, his brain-power and courage enabled him to carry on, especially during the Boer War, his administrative duties with vigour, but his tenure of office was unassociated with any marked reform or development.

The Government thus formed lasted for ten years (1895-1905), although during that period certain resignations and changes in high office occurred. When it did terminate, great was its collapse and that of the party supporting it ; and in the seventeen years since its fall, the Unionist Party has never even partially recovered its previous authority. At first sight it would seem that this unprecedented débâcle of the party was due to dissension upon fiscal questions ; but there were other and latent influences at work whose operation must not be ignored.

The combination between Salisbury and Smith was a happy mixture of the most worthy influences of Toryism. Salisbury represented more effectively than any leader of the last half-century the best qualities of the governing aristocrat. He was

patriotic, self-denying, of exceptional industry and ability. Office to him was only an instrument for the promotion of his country's welfare. At any moment without a murmur or complaint he would have laid down the burden of authority. He thought and fought for his order, not to ensure to them privileges or exemptions, but because he believed that their maintenance did supply the best material for sound and reliable government. Although he lived mostly with his peers, there was nothing egotistical or arrogant in his personality; but he did not know or come sufficiently into contact with influences, movements and aspirations of classes other than his own. Smith admirably supplied this deficiency. A self-made man and the head of a gigantic publishing enterprise, he knew, felt and assimilated all that was best in the progressive movements of the day. His common sense and perception (amounting to genius) rarely, if ever, failed him in his diagnosis of the agitation of the moment. Although Salisbury and he never differed in public, many were the tussles behind the scenes over legislation and policy, and though they imposed a very heavy strain on Smith, he manfully stuck to his guns, and the years during which he and Salisbury were the leaders were more fruitful in useful legislation than any similar period of Tory ascendancy. Moreover, Smith gave time and attention to the wearisome and often sordid details of party organisation and management.

Arthur Balfour was neither by temperament nor inclination adapted to such work, and although he brought a most brilliant and incisive intellect to bear upon his duties, he lived too much in the same groove and was bred too much in the same school of ideas as his uncle to supply Smith's place as adviser and guide

in mundane political and popular work. He was bored to extinction with party details, and, though one of the most courageous men alive in an emergency, he had an innate antipathy to unpleasant interviews with colleagues and subordinates or to that part of the irksome work of leadership which can only be discharged by personal attention and application. His conduct of Irish affairs was by far the most brilliant piece of Parliamentary debate and administration in my generation, yet, curiously enough, the training of that terribly severe ordeal was a disqualification for some of his subsequent duties as Leader of the House of Commons. The Irish Nationalist papers were so abusive and inaccurate that he found it a waste of time to read them. He therefore slipped into the practice of declining to read any newspaper at all—a most impossible attitude for a House of Commons leader. His extraordinary quickness in debate and reply enabled him when Irish Secretary (for he was always on the defensive) to speak without preparation or a study of the subject under discussion, and this habit grew upon him with advancing years and increasing pressure on his time. His rare personal charm, his exquisite literary instincts, together with his exceptional intellectual gifts made him the dominant personality of the House of Commons, and that ascendancy he maintained; but in the country his influence did not increase, for his speeches on the platform were out of touch with what people were thinking and saying at the time he spoke.

This detachment increased and affected most of his intimates, until they drifted into something separate and apart from the rank and file of the party they were supposed to guide and indoctrinate.

Politics became a by-product, but not the dominant interest of their career ; but they are a very exacting mistress, and he who wishes to be pre-eminent in this sphere of work must not only subordinate all other pastimes to his political duties, but he must, in addition, so conduct himself as to impress upon his colleagues and followers a sense of genuine sincerity and belief in what he says and does ; otherwise, no matter how gifted he may be, he will court failure. Politics, like religion, are founded upon belief. If the germs of disbelief or distrust once creep into their fabric, its disintegrating influence very soon asserts itself, and this doubt contributed almost as much to the débâcle of the Unionist Party as fiscal differences.

During the earlier epoch of Salisbury's administration successful Egyptian and South African campaigns endowed it with a temporary popularity ; but when he retired, his successor had to face the accumulated effects of seven years of internal simmering and dissatisfaction. The working of the caucus system aggravated this discontent ; their selections were not infrequently determined more by wealth than ability, and thus opulent mediocrity had more than its fair share of the representation of the party.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE Secretary of State in Council, i.e. the India Office, for more than seventy years was the administrative influence by which an autocratic Government at the other end of the world was maintained controlling 300 millions of people, and yet during the whole of that period was constitutionally subordinate to a democratic House of Commons. Looking at the immense difficulty of giving India a just and progressive government and at the same time retaining and exercising the summary powers of action which all Eastern authorities must have in reserve, the constitution and composition of the Government of India, as established under the Act of 1858, have worked extraordinarily well, but they have worked well because the great bulk of the House of Commons has been reluctant to interfere with or upset the decisions or policy of the Indian Government unless there were imperative reasons for such interference. Indian questions have thus been kept outside the influence and movement of party politics. The powers of the Secretary of State and the Governor-General in Council are immense. Every Secretary of State soon learns that he must very closely watch over the exercise of this almost unlimited authority, so as to give no reasonable pretext for Parliamentary interference or reversal of its action. He has to use the well-known illustration of Sir Henry Maine—to keep accurate watch and

reckoning simultaneously in two spheres of longitude widely apart. To achieve this not always easy task, he should select the ablest available Anglo-Indian civilians as coadjutors both for himself and the Viceroy. Ability and experience rather than personal preference for easy-going colleagues should be the dominant qualification. I am afraid that of recent years this consideration has not been always adhered to, and a good deal of the trouble latterly in India and the demand for change has its root in the non-observance of this indisputable principle. Our Empire in India was founded and consolidated by a few able, daring and far-seeing statesmen, and it can only be retained by an exercise of the same qualities, which are inbred rather than the product of competitive examination. How to find or get them is becoming a more and more troublesome problem.

I held office as Secretary of State for India for over eight years—a record tenure—and during that time I was successful in steering India through a number of troubles, and in only one case was the action taken seriously contested in Parliament. This criticism, however, was largely based on preconceived party ideas and was in consequence easily defeated. The governing principle of the Act of 1858 is the absolute control of the Secretary of State in Council over expenditure from Indian revenues. He and his Council occupy a financial zarefa which cannot be stormed even by a unanimous Government. The Secretary of State might be forced to resign under such conditions, but if his successor and Council stick to their original decision, they cannot be dispossessed. This principle has worked very well, and latterly financial sympathy for India is so strongly felt in the House of Commons that an objection has been

taken on more than one occasion to India's becoming, even with the assent of State in Council, a partner in the expenditure of expeditions which, though Imperial in name, were undertaken for India's protection and benefit.

Indian finance has been admirably managed. At the time the Crown succeeded to the heritage of the East India Company, India was almost bankrupt. She has now, even with the additional liabilities incurred by the Great War, the best balance-sheet of any country in the world. Her deadweight debt is almost negligible, and her remunerative assets in the shape of public works now almost equalise the outlay incurred in making them, and they are yearly increasing in value. If any practical refutation is required of the charge of selfishness and unfair exploitation by Great Britain of her subordinate territories, India's balance-sheet supplies that defence. British financial experience, courage and engineering capacity have been continuously at India's disposal. No tribute has been exacted, no preferential duties or customs have been imposed for her benefit. The benefits accruing from India's expanding trade and prosperity have been shared in common with the rest of the world. Whilst adjacent Eastern countries have become more and more submerged in unprofitable trade and indigence, India's credit, borrowing power and prosperity have steadily improved.

We are apt to ignore and dislike self-glorification, and at times we push this reluctance too far, for we seem to prefer to leave the most praiseworthy features of our best policy in oblivion rather than incur the charge of self-advertisement. The history of India's progress and development during the sixty years she was administered by the Crown and

Parliament of Great Britain is a record of unselfish, unostentatious and successful work such as few, if any, self-governing countries have to their credit. In these days of universal propaganda any nation is seriously handicapped which declines, whether from tradition or self-sufficiency, to sing the song of its own successes and achievements; and whether we like it or not, we must for our reputation and safety make publicity for the future an organised factor and department of our Government.

The India Office, although a most important section of Imperial administration, is thus much less in contact with the House of Commons, so far as its daily work is concerned, than the other big departments of State, and its Chief, unless he prominently participates in general debate, gradually slips out of the public eye. With four such debaters as Balfour, Goschen, Chamberlain and Beach I certainly was not wanted in discussions outside my department. I was thus able to do what my soul delighted in, viz. concentrate all my attention upon my departmental work, with the pleasing knowledge that, provided I carried my Council and the Viceroy with me, I had a free hand for change, reform or improvement. Parliamentary Government, especially as regards its control over the executive, is at times a great nuisance and a shocking impediment to prompt and effective action. Provided there is no pressing or sensational question on the tapis, the House of Commons is disposed to leave a department in comparative peace to do its allotted job. But the moment a crisis occurs, then the department affected, which for the time being is working at the very highest tension, is bombarded with questions, interpellations and demands for returns which not in-

frequently absorb many hours of attention from the very officials who are best qualified to deal with the emergent subject. The amount of time wasted and the disorganisation caused by this incessant torrent of interrogation is well known to all experienced Parliamentarians. I assume that it is a necessary evil inseparable from Parliamentary control, but an evil it is, at times expanding into a danger.

It was pleasant to be made to give the whole of one's time and energy to a department which is free from Parliamentary tutelage ; but to a Minister so freed there is this drawback. He gets out of touch with the tone and trend of the public topics and movements of the day. He soon finds this out when platform-speaking outside his constituency. He does not give the necessary priority to the matter of the moment ; he has frequently to hunt about to get the tone of his audience, and whilst so engaged he not infrequently loses a hold over it which he cannot afterwards regain. Successful platform-speaking depends more on the arrangement of the speech than on its argument. Given the first, the speech should be a success. Failing that quality, its arguments, however good, will not effectually permeate the audience.

Joseph Chamberlain was an extraordinarily effective platform orator. In congratulating him upon a speech in the House of Commons where he had had to conduct a very questionable case over the thinnest of ice, I said, "The arrangement of your speech was admirable." He replied, "I am glad you think so. I always give more thought and time to the arrangement than to the argument of my speeches."

CHAPTER XXIX

My tenure of the post of Secretary of State for India lasted over eight years—a record—but it was uneventful so far as outward and visible appearances were concerned. Internally, however, in spite of plague and famine, the progress of India in wealth and prosperity and trade was steady and continuous. Indications of unpleasant trouble, racial and religious, manifested themselves during the later part of this period, but to these I will refer presently.

It was seventeen years since I had left the India Office, and in the interval all my old colleagues and associates had disappeared. I came into contact with an entirely new set of councillors and officials. The Council had some very distinguished men upon it, notably Field-Marshal Sir Donald Stewart, Sir Alfred Lyall and Sir James Peile, but its average was not up to the level of the Council of 1874, and during my eight years of office it further retrograded. The two Viceroys with whom I had to deal were Lord Elgin and Lord Curzon—a curious contrast, though the former was much under-estimated from his dislike of publicity and notoriety.

Every Secretary of State is almost certain, if he is in office for more than five years, to have on his hands either a famine in some part of India or warlike disturbances on some section of the long frontier line. The so-called famines in India are not so much a food as a wage scarcity. The rainfall and

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climate of India so vary that never has there been an absolute insufficiency of food in the continent of India for all the people within it, but the difficulty has been one of distribution and transport, and in every succeeding decade, as our railway and irrigation systems develop, so do the consequences of local shortage become more limited and counteracted.

But famine and war in one sense are preventible. From the time of Joseph up to now the evil consequences of the former have been averted or palliated by foresight and prescient administration. War in the same sense can not infrequently be obviated by an attitude of *firmness and conciliation*. Under our party system, where fault-finding with those in office is the main object of the large proportion of the Opposition, the mere fact of there being a local famine or a frontier disturbance at once furnishes material for spiteful and unfair criticism. In the event of a shortage of food it is so easy to imply that the Secretary of State has been indifferent or callous to the warnings and signals of impending distress, and the test usually imposed upon his alertness and earnestness is not the amount or success of the work he is superintending, but the form and frequency of his appeals to the public for private subscriptions. When a duty is undertaken by a public authority, and it has at its disposal sufficient resources and machinery for dealing with the existing evil, it is exceptionally difficult to make such an appeal to the public as will ensure a good response without admitting that the Government is neglecting one of its elementary duties. To obtain any large sum from the public necessitates a vivid and pathetic account of the sufferings of the afflicted districts; but it provokes at once the rejoinder: "Why are you so

neglecting the work that it is your duty to undertake by trying to transfer to the shoulders of the public the task which belongs to you ? ” If you do appeal to the public to help you, you do so because you are incompetent. If you do not appeal, you are heartless and insensible. Such is the usual and varying form of criticism and attack made upon those in authority when dealing with famine.

We endeavoured, knowing what was in store for us, while perfecting the arrangements formerly employed for the distribution of the food, to limit these arrangements to the provision of the necessities of life and to appeal to the public to supplement our relief by comforts both of food and clothing. It is not difficult to keep to this line of division, but from the limitations it suggests you can never get anything like the sum obtainable if our arrangements had been so faulty as to cause heavy loss of life and health.

I was unfortunate enough to have a succession of famines to deal with, and although I am tolerably pachydermatous, the unjust criticism and abuse to which Lord Elgin and I were subjected in connection with famine administration arouses within me even to this day a vibrant indignation. There was the less justification for this misrepresentation as, when the relief operations were concluded and reviewed, it was generally admitted that they had been exceptionally effective and successful.

In the same way a war on the Indian frontier, especially if it attains large dimensions, affords another opportunity for party attack and misrepresentation. There is a large section of the public who is taught to believe that if we on our side of the frontier will leave alone those on the other side, they will

reciprocate such an action by leaving us alone. For many years past there has been a controversy between a forward policy and one of inactivity on our front, and the adherents of the latter policy used to assert that the adoption of their views would ensure permanent peace and tranquillity all over our front. There is no greater delusion. Where tribes have for many centuries been accustomed to raid and loot one another, the very fact that wealth and prosperity are being accumulated beyond their borders is an additional inducement to them to attack the district so prospering, especially if it is unable to defend itself. Force and easy communications are essential if peace is to be preserved.

Shortly before the resignation of Lord Rosebery's Government the Indian authorities were obliged to send up a small mission to re-establish order in the distant and petty State of Chitral, a little principality situated in the extreme north-east section of our frontier. Chitral is a tributary of Kashmir and consequently within our political sphere of influence. It is sandwiched in between two high sections of the Afghan and Russian frontier, and it was believed to be of great strategical importance as a good jumping-off ground for expeditions and invasions of the countries over which it towers. The capital of the State was only sixty miles on our side of the Russian frontier. One of the objects of this mission was to settle conflicting claims to the chieftaincy through the late Mehtar (as he was called) having been assassinated by his brother, who then took his place. This small force clambered up the difficult but only available road in our territory leading to Chitral. This road was very steep and circuitous and was dreaded by all who had to traverse it. The natural route to

Chitral was by Peshawar and then for a short distance through the lands of the Nawal of Dir and of the Swati tribes. A portion of this territory was outside our acknowledged frontier. On their arrival in Chitral our mission was suddenly and treacherously attacked and, in spite of a friendly chief, was there beleaguered. They made a spirited defence against great odds, and Major Townshend (subsequently of Kut fame) was in command. A large expedition had therefore to be sent up for their relief, which was easily effected. Prior to the despatch of this latter force the assent of the tribes was obtained to the construction of a road between Peshawar and Chitral, and a proclamation was issued by the Viceroy to the tribes assuring them that if they assented to the construction of the road they would in no sense be subsequently interfered with. This understanding having been effected, the expedition without difficulty reached Chitral and relieved their besieged countrymen. The question then arose, what was to be done with Chitral? To abandon it meant the massacre there of all who had befriended us and made almost impossible the fulfilment of the obligations we had undertaken both with Russia and the Ameer of Afghanistan as regards the tranquillity of this part of our acknowledged sphere of influence. To hold it necessitated keeping open the road recently made. The Indian Government unanimously recommended that the latter course should be adopted, and the Radical Government at home were pondering over this (to them) unpleasant proposition when they vacated office, having settled nothing except to say "no" to the only practical scheme before them.

I thus found myself, as soon as I got inside the India Office, up to the neck in the old partisan

frontier controversy which had raged with such acrimony during the later years of Disraeli's Government.

Certain members of the Indian Council who in the past days had been opponents of the forward school were antagonistic to the Indian Government's proposals, and I was at first sight inclined to side with them; but on consulting Lansdowne, who had just come back from India, he convinced me that the risk consequent on the evacuation, and the insurmountable difficulties it would create in the enforcement of the frontier conventions we had just made, were so grave that the wisest and cheapest course was to accept the Indian Government's suggestion. This we did. The road, partially made by our predecessors, was widened and improved with the assent of the tribes through whose territory it passed, and a small native force was left at Chitral, we having negotiated a satisfactory settlement as regards the sitting Chief of Chitral. Though the course thus adopted by the Indian Government was the subject of cavil and criticism in certain parliamentary circles, no serious objection was taken to what was obviously the least risky and unsatisfactory policy open to us.

During the recess I read up and studied the voluminous papers and despatches relating to the policy pursued along our frontier since I was last at the India Office. In the Midlothian campaign the frontier policy of Beaconsfield's Government stood only second in infamy to his European arrangements. Here again the course of events had been too strong for our Pharisaical critics. There was scarcely a principle in the maligned policy of Lord Lytton that Gladstone and his Government had not been subsequently compelled to rehabilitate and enforce. Lord

Northbrook, when Viceroy of India, was not allowed to give the Ameer of Afghanistan a limited guarantee of protection against foreign aggression. A short time afterwards a practically unconditional assurance and a large subsidy were spontaneously given to the new Ameer by the very men who had summarily put on one side the suppliant request of his predecessor. A subsequent convention with the Ameer made us responsible for the behaviour of tribes outside our legal frontier, and this arrangement, known as the “ Durand Agreement,” coupled with the frontier delimitations accepted by Russia, placed upon the Government of India the responsibilities and obligations for the good behaviour of the whole of the inhabitants up to the accepted Afghan and Russian frontier line. This again was a flagrant violation of the policy of the “ Masterly Inactivity School,” whose dictum had been an uncompromising refusal of any responsibility for the good conduct of those outside our administrative frontier.

But worse was to follow. Waziristan, a large and unhealthy tract of country outside the old frontier of India, was a hotbed of dacoits, raiding parties and organised thieving. A large expedition was sent against the Waziris in 1893-4, and when it had successfully concluded its operations on behalf of the Radical Government, Sir Henry Fowler overruled a minority of the Government of India in their protest against the establishment of permanent garrisons in these outlandish localities. Sanction was then given to the location of these forces outside the administrative frontier. This forward action upset the very foundations of the whole fabric of Radical non-intervention. So little attention was given by the Radical Party to their frontier policy

in India that neither leaders nor followers were aware of what they had done when in office or of the topsy-turvy changes effected in the principles they had previously proclaimed from the housetop. As soon as they were out of office they began to weave their myths over frontier questions, and to speak as if the last decade had been an epoch of stagnant and successful conformity with their old shibboleths. An opportunity was soon given them to show their partisanship. In the autumn of 1897 a tribal outbreak of Waziris rapidly developed into a most serious frontier war. It ran right up from Waziristan to Chakdara, a cantonment somewhere beyond Peshawar, and guarding the bridgehead of the road leading to Chitral. It spread and spread, the Afridis joined it, and the Government of India had to mobilise some 70,000 men to stamp it out. This was effectually done in the course of the next two months. It was indisputable that this outbreak originated not where we had made the road, but where our predecessors had placed garrisons; but what did this matter? An ignorant and presumptuous Secretary of State had departed from the tactics of masterly inactivity: see the consequences in a big and avoidable war. The country must revert to the sound doctrines of Gladstone's Government, and a vote of want of confidence must be moved as soon as Parliament met. The Opposition were discredited by their recent crushing electoral defeat. They had no effective ammunition for party meetings, so they seized upon the opportunity given by these tribal outbreaks, and their leaders, Harcourt, Morley, Asquith and Reid (late Attorney-General), were at once in full cry. Meetings were organised all over the country, and all the party paraphernalia was put

in motion preparatory to a formal parliamentary indictment.

During this commotion the Government, including myself, remained quiescent, but with the knowledge of my colleagues I was preparing a Blue Book so edited as to make it self-evident to anyone who even skimmed its contents that the successive acts of our predecessors involved wholesale repudiation of their previous and present declarations of policy. The more ignorant they were of its contents, the more damning became their own self-condemnation. I further associated with this Blue Book a long despatch laying down for the future guidance of our policy on the frontier a series of principles which time and recent experience had proved to be essential to the peace of the districts concerned and by removing distrust would secure the co-operation of our neighbours.

So soon as our opponents had irretrievably committed themselves by giving formal declaration to the terms of their vote of censure, I circulated this Blue Book, the publication of which I had purposely kept back. Though the book contained the terms of peace accepted by the tribes after their outbreak, there was not a word of complaint about the road which it was alleged was the primary and sole cause of the recent outbreak.

The Radicals were very angry at being made to look and feel such fools ; they asserted it was not fair of me to keep back this Blue Book, that I ought to have made known its contents and thus prevented them from committing themselves as they had done on the platform. They could not withdraw the motion they had made, but to argue it with their past offences thus recorded against them was impossible. They therefore put up a clever lawyer to lead

the attack. He made a thoroughly "nisi prius" oration, based on what was done twenty years ago and omitting all notice of events and obligations during the past fifteen years. In the debate it was the Opposition and not we who were in the dock, and after a most one-sided debate we obtained a majority of over a hundred.

Good, however, accrued from this partisan fiasco. Never since has the frontier policy of India been criticised from preconceived party purviews. The difficulties to be there faced were recognised as indigenous and permanent and not capable of settlement by the diatribes and declamation of platform politicians.

The campaign along this long range of hostile country and against born marksmen and skirmishers placed a searching test upon the quality of the troops there engaged. Young soldiers trained in the plains were of little use in this mountainous warfare, and one or two unpleasant setbacks occurred. By far the most formidable of our assailants was that curious congregation of individuals known as the Afridis. To what race they belong or from where they come has always been a puzzle to the historical student. They vary much in physique, in colour and demeanour. Their one common attribute is the nursing of implacable family feuds. The fiercest of Corsican vendettas pales before the undying animosity of these family quarrels. Adjacent houses are fortified and protected one against another to a point of inconvenience which is almost inconceivable when these barricades are not temporary but are in existence all day and every day. When on British soil this feud is supposed to be suspended, but this is not always the case. Lord Mayo, in the prime of his

viceroyalty, was murdered by an Afridi convict in the Andaman Islands. This man had been an orderly to a high military authority at Peshawar. He was exemplary in his conduct, and he took under his special protection the young children of his General. Unfortunately a member of the family with whom he was at feud crossed over into our territory. This was too much, so he was stalked and killed just within our boundaries. If he had been killed outside that limit, no punishment would have ensued ; but the act being within, his assailant was tried and condemned for murder and transported to the Andamans. This rough mountaineer could not understand the niceties of territorial jurisdiction. He had faithfully fulfilled every obligation he had contracted with the British Sirdar, and been more than once specially decorated ; yet because he fulfilled a family obligation on British territory he was branded as a murderer and punished, whereas if he had performed the act a little farther off no notice would have been taken of it. He nursed this hostility against the agents of the Government which he believed had broken faith with him, and unfortunately Lord Mayo, in his personal disregard for danger, being unprotected whilst getting into his boat, fell a victim to a murderous assault with a knife.

The Afridi country was geographically the most difficult and its inhabitants were the most intractable of the whole frontier range. The Valley of Tirah was a by-word. Entrance into it or departure from it necessitated alike military precautions of the most exact nature. The General in command of the Punjab troops was the well-known soldier Sir William Lockhart. He was regarded as a unique expert in all frontier warfare. His presence

the scene of action was calculated to be worth a division, so great were the awe and confidence he inspired respectively into foe and friend. At this moment he was unwell and at home on leave, intending to go through a course of Nauheim for heart trouble. The Indian Government, as soon as they thought it probable that the Afridis were coming out, were anxious that the expedition against them, which would be of considerable dimensions, should be under his personal control. I saw him at the India Office just before he was leaving for Germany, and I told him the latest news from the frontier, where fighting on a considerable scale had already begun. I did not like to press upon him the duty which, if it cut into the middle of his cure, would very likely endanger not only his health but also his life. I shall not easily forget his answer to my suggestion: "If I am wanted and you will let me know by telegraph, I will undertake to be at the port of embarkation within twenty-four hours of the receipt of your message." The Afridis came out, the telegram went, and, true to his word, he and an aide-de-camp who was with him were on board the ship designated to take him within the twenty-four hours. He left his cure to take care of itself.

The campaign, though short, was arduous, and Lockhart's masterly dispositions completely baffled the enemy. He got into the Valley of Tirah with comparatively little loss of life, and the Afridis at once sued for peace. It is characteristic of the love that the Eastern fighting races have for a strong man that after the terms of peace were settled at a personal conference with an Afridi Jirgah, they lifted him up and carried him as a conqueror in triumph back to his house. The Sikhs, two detachments of

whom had been killed to a man in advanced forts, received him with like jubilation at Umballa, wishing to give a warm welcome to the great sahib who had given the Sikhs an occasion of showing how they could adhere to their vow of allegiance !

But the campaign killed Lockhart, who never recovered his health, and when shortly afterwards he became Commander-in-Chief in India he was a broken man with but a short period of life before him. I have more than once since then thought over the incident and wondered whether I was right in letting him know when his health was so indifferent that he was wanted on active service on the Indian frontier. He was a very valuable man. He was the third great Indian soldier with whom during my tenure of office I had the honour of working. Sir Donald Stewart, Lord Roberts and Sir William Lockhart form a trio whom in any day or under any conditions it would have been hard to match. Each was admirable with his own distinctive attributes, and yet personally they were so unlike one another. Donald Stewart was equally efficient in diplomatic and financial work as he was in his military operations. His march to Kabul from Kandahar was a masterpiece of carefully-thought-out plans, and his unselfish transfer to Roberts of the best elements of his armies in order that the younger general might march back and relieve Kandahar is a rare example of military self-denial and patriotic prescience.

Roberts's charm of manner, utter absence of self-assertion except on the battlefield, his daring, his inherent strategical instincts and his intense anxiety to promote the moral and material status of the Army made him beloved by all who knew him.

Lockhart's brain-power and determination, associ-

ated with an exceptional literary ability, put him quite on a level with his two great predecessors. If he had lived and retained his full health, he would have been invaluable in working out reforms which the Indian Army much needed. When Lockhart died, I spent several hours, assisted by the Permanent and Military Secretaries, at the India Office in going through the higher grades of the Indian Army, to see if we could find anyone coming on of the same calibre as these three great soldiers, and we searched in vain. This enquiry took place nearly twenty years back, and our conclusions have, I think, been endorsed by what has since occurred. The Indian regimental officer is still excellent, but there is a distinct deterioration in the grades above regimental commands. Military training in England has greatly improved; the ambitious officer no longer seeks efficiency in the Indian Army. The fluctuations in the exchange value of the rupee have disturbed the old monetary advantages resulting from Indian allowance, and in addition to these considerations there is the all-important fact that Indian military men under the present system of promotion are seldom put into positions of responsibility until they are about fifty or older. It is the general experience of those who have watched long periods of work in tropical climates that Europeans at or after fifty begin to show diminished vitality and energy.

It was my painful duty as Chairman of a Commission to enquire into the failure of the campaign in Mesopotamia in 1915-16, and I think that every one of the Commissioners felt that something had gone wrong with a noble Service and that one of the first duties of our military authorities was to attempt the resuscitation of its popularity and efficiency.

CHAPTER XXX

IN the beginning of the year 1897 India was startled by a double murder of a novel and sinister character. Two British officers were assassinated in their carriage on their return from a big official reception at the house of the Governor of Bombay. At first it was assumed that this murder was incidental rather than political, but investigation clearly showed that it was the work of an organised murder-gang. Various other outrages, some resulting in death and others in mutilation, were perpetrated within a certain area of the original crime. In all cases they were directed against officials or known friends of the British Raj. One of the murdered officials, Mr. Rand, was a very capable and well-known officer in charge of plague operations, but his associate, Lieutenant Ayres, was a medical officer, and it was believed that he was mistaken for another officer on plague duty. The audacity of the assassination perpetrated on a high-road along which a string of carriages was running carrying back the guests from the Government reception and the selection of the occasion of a great official function for the murder marked it as no ordinary outrage. For months past certain extreme native newspapers circulated amongst the Mahratta population had employed the most violent language against the attempts to stamp out plague and the officers engaged in the task. The articles in question were simply incentives to assassination, and the

nature of the examination of individuals in localities where plague was rampant was deliberately falsified. Although official action in certain cases had been taken, it was too spasmodic in its operation and the epidemic of misrepresentation too wholesale and repeated to be effectively counteracted by a limited use of Press control.

I am sorry to add that these falsehoods found their way into the House of Commons. Questions were put to me by reputed representatives of extreme native parties, and although I was able to show there was no truth in their allegations, the charges were repeated and circulated by those sections of the Radical Press which were working with the members in question. The most hurtful of these allegations was the statement that soldiers attached to the search parties used to strip women in the streets. This is the class of insinuation and allegation which maddens alike the orthodox Hindu and Mussulman. There was not a word of truth in these statements. The Government had given the strictest instructions that no woman was in any circumstances to be examined in public, and when examined under cover the examination was always conducted by specially trained women.

It was my business as Secretary of State to look through the translations of the native press, and I was horrified to find that any statement of the kind alluded to when once made in the House of Commons was circulated a thousandfold throughout India. I have very little doubt that the tone and language of certain English newspapers and of the members of Parliament with whom they were in liaison have been a contributing cause to the murder of British officers in India : not that the editors of such news-

papers had any idea of the terrible impression their articles made upon fanatics at the other end of the world; they were only concerned to damage the Government to which they were politically opposed, and they did not adjust their methods of attack to the atmosphere in which they soon became acclimatised.

After two years of patient investigation into the late agitation this murder-gang was broken up and its members either transported or hanged. When the documents relating to this particular trial came home, I found amongst them the confession and autobiography of the leader of the gang, written whilst in prison and under sentence of death. It was the saddest and most depressing story I have ever perused.

Sivaji was the great leader of the Mahrattas against the Moguls, and he carried on his operations with such success and ferocity that he contrived, with a limited number of wild horsemen and hill-fighters, to break up the apparently solid structure of the Empire. Amongst his other performances was the murder, at an arranged interview, of his chief Mohammedan opponent. The murder was effected during a friendly embrace by a stab through the kidneys with a specially-made knife.

Sivaji's name and worship had come very much to the front in the Deccan during the last thirty years. He was treated not only as a hero but as a demi-divinity, and the assassination to which I have alluded was eulogised as a patriotic act. It was during this agitation that this murder-gang came into existence. It was called "A Society for the Removal of Obstacles to the Hindu Religion," but consisted of about a dozen young men, almost boys,

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After two years of patient investigation into the late agitation this murder-gang was broken up and its members either transported or hanged. When the documents relating to this particular trial came home, I found amongst them the confession and autobiography of the leader of the gang, written whilst in prison and under sentence of death. It was the saddest and most depressing story I have ever perused.

Sivaji was the great leader of the Mahrattas against the Moguls, and he carried on his operations with such success and ferocity that he contrived, with a limited number of wild horsemen and hill-fighters, to break up the apparently solid structure of the Empire. Amongst his other performances was the murder, at an arranged interview, of his chief Mohammedan opponent. The murder was effected during a friendly embrace by a stab through the kidneys with a specially-made knife.

Sivaji's name and worship had come very much to the front in the Deccan during the last thirty years. He was treated not only as a hero but as a demigod, and the assassination to which I have alluded was eulogised as a patriotic act. It was during this agitation that this murder-gang came into existence. It was called "A Society for the Removal of Obstacles to the Hindu Religion," but consisted of about a dozen young men, almost boys,

all belonging to good Mahratta Brahmin families, and most, if not all, had been through advanced British schools. They had neither individually nor collectively any personal grievance against the British. Rand was unknown to them by sight or action, and the writer of the autobiography said that since he had been in prison he had heard nothing but what was to his credit.

Macaulay, the founder of the literary system of European education in India, predicted in one of his writings that in course of time his educational system would eliminate heathenism; and yet here we find a literary system of European education, when engrafted upon Asiatic mentality and fanaticism, so upsetting the mental balance of some of its recipients as to make them the ruthless and senseless perpetrators of outrage and murder. Curzon Wyllie, a political officer, beloved by the majority of his native associates and subordinates, was murdered at a reception held in the Imperial Institute of London for no sane reason. His murderer had a European education, and the instigation of this and other atrocities emanated from an Oxford graduate. Now what, under such conditions, should be done? Are we to stop this form of education? No, we cannot have recourse to such reaction, which would invalidate our claim to the government of India; but if we continue our present methods of education, we must take cognisance of an indisputable fact which underlies and at times thwarts our best efforts for India's amelioration. There is a fixed gulf between European and Asiatic mentalities which will always remain. Many natives express themselves in the English language with great fluency and ease. Do the words they use mean to us what they

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culminating throughout India. Minorities must rule in India, but what minority? This in the past has been the crux. At one time it was the Aryan, then the Mogul, at another period the Mahratta; but never have government and authority been based on the counting of noses. There is scarcely a big native State in India in which the governing races form the majority. It is now proposed to substitute the tongue for the sword as the organ through which the struggle for predominance of racial and religious difference is to be controlled and fixed. Self-determination—the American ex-President's remedy for the adjustment of differences between rival races and religions within given areas—has, wherever it has been since applied either in Europe or Asia, produced disturbance and insurrection. Why should its progeny be different in India? The problems in India are so complex and explosive that I should not like to imply blame upon those promoting schemes for their elucidation even when I distrusted their insight into and grip of the subjects with which they profess to deal; but they do not seem to have thought out where they are going, and what, unless human aspirations entirely change, must be the certain end of the policy they are advocating. It may be that, in their judgment, it is necessary to promote a plan in which British authority will be so gradually whittled down as to cease to be a potent factor in Indian government. If so, ought not we to have been told that such was the intention of the change? But an insidious and underhand method of obtaining this result forms the background of the new scheme. In the past and until quite recently England has achieved her incredible administrative success by giving to India the best of her manhood in the shape

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its precursor in 1887. There was no great inter-mural religious service attended by the crowned heads of Europe, such as had been held at Westminster Abbey in 1887, but a procession representing the many nationalities, races and territories within the British Empire meandered for many miles through the leading streets of the Metropolis. The Queen-Empress was in the centre of this wonderful display, and in her progress through the city she stopped for some time in the square in front of St. Paul's Cathedral, where she was presented with a religious address by the Archbishops and clergy of the Established and other Churches. This blending of Great Britain and the Antipodes and of the East with the West was extraordinarily effective, and gave to all who saw it some conception of the variety, the vastness and the cohesion of the British Empire. The Indian contingent eclipsed all others in the gorgeousness of its costumes and equipment. Foremost amongst this delegation was that splendid veteran soldier Sir Pertab Singh, a Rajput Chief of unblemished record and unimpeachable ancestry. He was a superb rider, and never before had such an opportunity been given before an unlimited European crowd for the display of the consummate horsemanship of the East. Mounted on a big and thoroughbred charger, from the moment the procession started till it came to an end—a period of over three hours—prominent in the centre of the cortège was Sir Pertab Singh on his curvetting, prancing, caracoling charger. To the delight of the huge crowd, this performance never ceased till the procession dispersed, and whilst the European riders looked tired and listless and somewhat bored by their lengthy peregrination through narrow streets, our

realise the deep devotion and indestructible traditions that entwine themselves around the monarchic legend in warmer and more impressionable latitudes.

During the Great War we were supposed to be fighting for democracy against autocracy, and we won ; but democracy, though nominally supreme, is not at present sitting very comfortably or firmly in the seats of the dispossessed authorities. Autocracy and monarchy failed, and deserved punishment because their possessors either grossly abused their temporary authority or declined to use it for the protection of the State or for their poorer subjects against systematic corruption and extortion. I am convinced that the monarchical principle will return, and with reasonable restrictions against its misuse will again permeate Asia and Central Europe. Let us, then, in our attempts to give new constitutions to countries and dominions both within and without the British Empire, not forget or ignore the immense hold which a personal and visible discharge of authority has upon the world at large, and not shape our course regardless of this irrepressible predilection.

Rajput Chief never flagged or allowed a symptom of fatigue to escape from him.

Owing to King Edward's serious illness on the eve of his coronation, there was no similar display in 1902; but the fact of his being so ill brought indelibly home to me (I was Secretary of State for India at the time) the great ineradicable power of the monarchical principle. The delegation from India was large, varied and thoroughly representative. One and all took the King-Emperor's illness as that of an intimate relative. It was impossible to get them to take an interest in anything else so long as his condition was critical. When he was slowly recovering, the one idea of those members of the delegation who had been conveyed from India to England at the Government's expense was to be allowed to remain till they could themselves see the face of the *de facto* descendant of the "Great Mogul." A large deputation of native officers came to me at the India Office. They had a request of supreme importance to make, and, in accordance with Eastern custom, each placed his sword at my feet. They then presented their petition. It was to the effect that they must personally see their King-Emperor, that their faces would be eternally blackened if they did not before their return to India discharge this sacred duty. If expense was an obstacle, they offered to give up all their extra allowances and "batta." The Sikhs' representative, a priest of eminence, absolutely declined to go, and said that, though poor, he would beg his way back to India rather than not see the King.

It is well in these cold northern latitudes, where government is assumed by some to be secure if based on logic and common sense, that we should

realise the deep devotion and indestructible traditions that entwine themselves around the monarchical legend in warmer and more impressionable latitudes.

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CHAPTER XXXI

FOR some time previous to the formation of Lord Salisbury's Government of 1895 there had been simmering discontent amongst the Uitlanders in the Transvaal against the Government of Pretoria. The discovery of the almost inexhaustible gold-fields of Johannesburg had brought from all parts of the world the adventurous and disreputable elements of civilisation into the territory of the Boer. It would be difficult to exaggerate the fundamental differences in the outlook and objects of life between those which animated the dour "Dopper" authorities in Pretoria and the rowdy, rollicking, go-ahead proclivities of the miner populations under their control; but the former owed their affluence and strength mainly to the exertions of the latter, and yet the latter were denied all share in the government they so sustained. Putting on one side a natural preference for the virile though bigoted temperament of the Boers as against the cosmopolitan Semitism of Johannesburg, the dispute between the two admitted of but one solution—a fair share in the control of the Government the burden of which they bore. Amongst the more sensible and civilised of the Boers this view widely prevailed; but the governing clique at Pretoria was composed of the narrowest sectarians, and it became religious obsession on their part to refuse all concessions to subjects with a religious and racial pedigree antagonistic to their own.

Towards the end of 1895 a surprising rumour

converting itself into truth reached us in London of a raid upon Johannesburg by a small column of improvised cavalry. This column started from Mafeking, then a small village just within British jurisdiction. The news was so astounding that at first it was not believed; but when it became supported by indisputable evidence, then astonishment and bewilderment succeeded incredulity. We were at profound peace with the Transvaal Government. The fighting power of the Boers, both personal and collective, was well known; yet here was a tiny force of three or four hundred hastily-recruited men jumping off on an expedition the first objective of which must be the capture and retention of the huge, straggling community of Johannesburg. The insane audacity of the movement and the utter inadequacy of preparation and numbers for the objects in view gave a certain glamour to the enterprise which misled even sensible politicians, and for a day or two the raiders were the darling of a certain section of our Press. But the ignominious failure of the attempt and the utter ineptitude shown by those in charge of it soon brought home to all the folly and iniquity of this scandalous violation of international law. Chamberlain at once took control of the tangle, and, thanks to his firmness and Kruger's clemency, a settlement was arrived at both as regards compensation and punishment of the offenders. In my judgment, the punishment inflicted upon the officers concerned was quite insufficient. They should have been simultaneously cashiered. As it was, most of them, after their temporary punishment, crept back into the Army. The Transvaal Government might, according to international law, have shot the whole of them. I felt strongly on the inadequacy

of the punishment. In India there were constant discoveries of the intrigues of Russian emissaries along our frontiers. Sometimes the allegations were exaggerated, sometimes untrue, sometimes true; but if an armed expedition, headed by officers of the Emperor of Russia's Household Troops, had invaded British territory, we should have insisted upon a severe military penalty. These light sentences and the approval shown in certain social circles of the offenders did us, as a nation and Government incalculable harm. It was another illustration of "Albion's perfidy," and the prejudice and hostility shown towards us by the world at large when, later on, we were obliged to accept Kruger's challenge can be traced to a legitimate resentment against not merely the outrageous nature of the offence, but the highly inadequate sentences inflicted upon the promoters.

A certain mystery even to this day hangs over the inception and execution of the raid. It was clear that Chamberlain had nothing to do with it—it was not the kind of transaction he would have touched; and if he had been a party to it, he would certainly have taken care that it did not collapse from ineptitude and the want of push and organisation. A large section of the Radical Party, without producing a particle of evidence in support of their contention, even after the enquiry was over, did associate Chamberlain with the raid, and I was privately told by a very high authority that the main cause of Harcourt's retirement from the leadership of the Radical Party was his refusal to associate himself with such an accusation.

Cecil Rhodes's complicity in this conspiracy was proved and admitted by him. It was *the* blunder in the career of one of the biggest men of the last half-

century. A masterful patience and volcanic impulse were his two great attributes. By their alternate exercise he swept on one side the almost insurmountable impediments to the fusion of race and territory in South Africa, and just as he was in sight of the completion of his far-seeing policy, he gave way to the impulse of primitive man and—to use his own homely expression—“upset the apple-cart.”

He was not fifty years old when he died. He started as one of the large family of a poor clergyman, without money, health or influence behind him. In less than thirty years, unaided, by his personal work alone, he amassed a gigantic fortune in two great industries which he had himself largely created. He spent his wealth and the influence it gave him in the promulgation of a vast Imperial policy—a policy which, though checked by the untoward circumstances of the raid, now holds the field right throughout the huge Continent of Africa. Napoleonic indeed were his methods and ideals, but they did not totter or collapse at his death, as did those of his great prototype. They have since prospered and expanded. It would be difficult to find in the history of the world a more rapid and successful creator of Empire than Cecil Rhodes.

Reverting to this indefensible raid from Mafeking, not only did it arouse moral indignation against the British Government, but it led at once to the arming and organisation of the whole Boer male population as a national military force. In the past such military equipment was limited to purposes of self-defence against the turbulent elements of the coloured population; now it was directed against Great Britain. Artillery field-guns ranging up to 6-inch calibre were imported in large

numbers, and drilling, training and staff organisation went on *pari passu* with this wholesale importation of munitions of war. The British Government was perfectly aware of what this meant and to what it must lead, but their powers of protest were nullified by the imbecile appeal to force made by the raiders. All that we could do was to increase our garrisons in Natal and Cape Colony, but we had to do this circumspectly and in moderation. As the Boers became better organised, so did the pressure increase upon the Government at Pretoria to take the initiative, and foremost in promoting this propaganda was Germany, acting both through official and unofficial agents. The breach widened more and more between Pretoria and London. Kruger was a shrewd and capable ruler, half a fighter and half a devotee, but always keeping an eye on the main chance, whatever that might be at the moment.

Majuba Hill and the astonishing defeat which we there sustained was a contributing factor to the disruption of the negotiations commenced in 1895. The Boer regarded with contempt the race that had placidly accepted this previous defeat. In the propaganda circulated by Dutch and German emissaries grotesque stories were told and pictures invented of terrified British recruits being dragged off in chains by gigantic Boers, and—ridiculous as it may now seem—Kruger's entourage really thought that Great Britain could not bring a force adequate to overcome their militia.

Ultimately Kruger made a false move in declaring war upon us. If he had sat tight and made us take the initiative, I very much doubt if we should have secured a warm, hearty majority here for the prosecution of the war.

The story of the war, our early failures and losses, the successful combination of Roberts and Kitchener later on, have been too often described to need recapitulation ; but as one in the thick of the preparations and arrangements made I must try to clear away one general misapprehension.

It has been assumed in certain quarters that our early failures were due to the politicians miscalculating the fighting power of the Boers, and upon this miscalculation they proceeded to cut down the preparations which the military authorities put forward. This is quite incorrect. It was the soldiers, rather than the civilian politicians, who underestimated the task before them. The war resolved itself into one gigantic skirmish, and at this particular form of fighting the Boer was a special adept. No Regulars trained in the most approved barrack-square drill could equal as skirmishers farmers each on his own pony, accustomed to prolonged exercise in the open air, born shots and familiar with every nook and cranny of the enormous veldt and sparsely inhabited country. Moreover, they contrived to move guns (then considered to be of heavy calibre) with a facility and speed which amazed the orthodox artilleryman. There was no military demand of substance made by the War Office upon the Government which was refused except one, viz. a request from Lord Wolseley to mobilise the reserves during negotiations. If this had been done, from a military point of view our preparations would have been more complete, and we should have had a large force at our disposal at the declaration of war ; but the moral and political effect of a great nation deliberately massing its forces prior to pacific negotiations with two little States would have been disastrous. As it was, it was only

the acknowledged predominance of our Fleet over any combination of foreign navies that saved us from a forcible intervention by the big neutral Powers, and mobilisation during the negotiations would probably have resulted in a practically unanimous international protest against such dragooning tactics.

Amongst the soldiers I never heard a doubt as to the adequacy of the preparations proposed by Lord Wolseley (then Commander-in-Chief). Sir Redvers Buller visited the Queen at Balmoral previous to taking over the chief command in South Africa. Almost his last words at Balmoral to his friends were to the effect that by the time he arrived at Cape Town he feared the fighting would be over. I had an even more confident expression of opinion from Lord Wolseley. As soon as there seemed to be a reasonable likelihood of fighting in South Africa, I suggested to my colleagues that as all the British military establishments in India were on a war footing and as South Africa was so much nearer to Bombay than the English Channel, it would be advisable to send a large contingent from India if the Indian Government could spare it. Wolseley objected, but my colleagues overruled him; and Curzon (then Viceroy of India), with his characteristic thoroughness, threw himself into the idea, and a large force in India was secretly earmarked for this purpose and the necessary transport taken up.

In the early autumn of 1899 I was at Deal, and one morning I received a bundle of papers from the India Office. Amongst them was a packet from the War Office, and at the top of this packet was a minute written by Sir Beauchamp Duff (then Assistant Private Secretary to Lord Wolseley) to the effect that he was instructed by him to say that in the

eventuality of hostilities with the Transvaal, no assistance would be required from the Indian establishment, and that they should be so informed by telegraph.

The situation was daily becoming more menacing, and if, as seemed certain, hostilities did commence, Indian reinforcements could be placed in South Africa in about half the time required for troops coming from England. I declined to send the telegram. I communicated with Lansdowne (then Minister for War), who, for the moment, was in Ireland, and who thoroughly agreed with me and desired that the expectant attitude of the Indian Government should be fully maintained. Within a few days of the above incident war broke out, and the Indian contingent was only just in time to prevent the whole of Natal from falling into the hands of the invading Boers.

Wolseley's refusal to avail himself of India's proper military assistance can only have been based upon supreme confidence in the adequacy of his own preparations.

About six weeks later I sat next to Wolseley at dinner. There were rumours then afloat in official circles that he was suffering from loss of memory, which, though intermittent, was during its spasms thorough and complete. As I wanted to get to the subject of the Indian contingent, I said by way of opening up the conversation, "You have a secretary called Duff?" "No, I have not," he replied. "Yes," I reiterated—"Beauchamp Duff, who was appointed by the India Office." "No, no; you are quite mistaken. I never had any secretary of that name." I saw it was hopeless to persevere, and I realised for the first time how terribly handicapped Lansdowne

was by the partial paralysis of his colleague. Since then others have told me that he could write quite a good minute, go home, and so forget all about it as to deny next day that he ever wrote it. At one moment he was his old self, at another half dormant.

I had known Wolseley for many years, and he had always been very kind and considerate to all his young officers, of whom for some years I was one. He had exceptional abilities, industry and resource, and he fought with rare courage and success and almost single-handed the cause of modern ideas and their introduction into our army system. Against great odds he contrived to lay the foundation of a reorganised and improved Army. Early in life he had been more than once severely wounded with great loss of blood. It was truly tragic that this man, who had by his courage and ability fought his way up to the very top of his profession, should in the military crisis of his life, when his exceptional experience and services were specially required by his country, have been partially incapacitated by such a defect.

A Commission over which Elgin presided was appointed to enquire into the conduct of the war. I wanted to give evidence before it, in order that the public might know what Lansdowne's real difficulties had been, as a dead set had been made against him by a group of military men and journalists. Lansdowne, with his usual nobility of instinct, preferred the risk of misrepresentation rather than aggravate the controversy by counter-charges. I think that he was wrong, but I naturally accepted his decision.

After the war was over, Lord Wolseley did make a speech in the House of Lords in which he intimated

that if he had only had greater powers the progress and finish of the war would have been very different from what they had been. Lord Lansdowne, in a very judicious reply, stated that he thought the main cause of our non-success at the beginning was not the lack of powers of the Commander-in-Chief, but the fitful exercise of those powers—a very kindly and considerate method of expressing the loss of memory from which Lord Wolseley suffered. But the Press was practically unanimous in condemning Lord Lansdowne for trying to save his reputation at the expense of a distinguished soldier. So is history sometimes written.

Whilst South Africa gave us a black week of reverses in December 1899, on the other hand British arms in mid-Africa achieved a final victory, over their old enemy the Khalifa, who was killed and his army destroyed in the same month. We glory in the size, power and ubiquity of our Empire, but it is a very exacting mistress in the never-ceasing toll that it exacts of the best of our adolescent manhood.

CHAPTER XXXII

RESUMING my chronological summary of important political events, I have to recall the death of Gladstone in 1898. He had long been ailing, and since his retirement from the premiership in 1894 he had taken no part in political current affairs. Of all the activities of life there is none that seems to me to evoke after death so little gratitude or recollection from the living as that of politics. It is the practice, when a death is first known, to pay highflown formal compliments both in Parliament and the Press to the memory of the distinguished man who has gone; but in a very short time his work is forgotten and he becomes a by-product of antiquity. His partisan utility is gone; his personal attraction is no longer there; the close of his life is probably associated more with failure than success; and unless he has founded a special school of thought or policy, his career and exploits are rapidly buried in oblivion. In my own recollection, man after man of distinction has disappeared and his place in national history has almost simultaneously disappeared with him; and yet many of them gave the best part of their lives, energy and thought to an unselfish service devoted to the benefit of their country.

Gladstone for sixty years had been in the forefront of Imperial politics, and the greater part of that time had been spent in high office. He had been four times Prime Minister, and during his

lifetime was apparently surrounded by a popularity and adulation rarely if ever before attained in this country. His devotion to the work he undertook, his unshakable belief in its national efficiency, his untiring energy and exceptional intellectual attainments, coupled with a high moral standard of conduct, should have secured to him for many years to come unmistakable marks of popular adoration. Yet the crowd at his funeral at Westminster was so thin and meagre that even in the short route between the House of Lords and the Abbey it was not ten deep.

When I looked at this tiny crowd and contrasted it with the life and achievements of the great man whose funeral they were attending, there came home to me the profound truth of the Preacher's description of life: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

In this year the quiet, capable Pro-consul Lord Elgin was replaced as Viceroy of India by the ardent and indefatigable personality of Lord Curzon. No man since the days of Dalhousie was better qualified by his antecedents, aptitude and aspirations to occupy this Imperial post, and great were the expectations of his friends and admirers. He did much good work and carried out reforms and improvements in almost every branch of Indian polity; but his work was somewhat overshadowed and effaced by the circumstances of his retirement, the result of a personal difference with Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief. His work was so ubiquitous and detailed that I cannot attempt to give even a short synopsis of what he did; but the mention of some of his bigger performances gives an idea of his irrepressible energy, for though much

of what he did was the joint conception of himself and the Secretary of State, to him must be given the credit of translating ideas into acts. He laid down new and general principles for the guidance of our frontier policy which have since worked so well that little, if any, alteration has been made in them. He gave effect to the long-expressed wish of those trading in or with India for the introduction of a gold standard. He remodelled the whole system of education and the rules regulating furlough and temporary appointment—both very irksome and tedious tasks. Finding that the Central European Powers were about to undermine the vast sugar-cane industry of India by an insidious application of the beet-sugar bounty system, he put on counter-vailing duties to counteract this idea. So successful was this beginning of retaliation against bounty-fed sugar that it shook the whole fabric of this artificially supported industry. I have nothing but praise for the results of these and equally beneficent changes; but I must add that the methods by which they were carried through aggravated the standing evil of the Supreme Government's system of over-centralisation.

Curzon took upon his shoulders responsibility for the whole administration of India. It was a task too heavy even for him and quite beyond the capacity of those who succeeded him. This centrality of authority, especially when exercised from Simla—a hill-top only just outside the borders of Nepal—is the cause of much of the recent agitation for provincial home rule. Curiously enough, whilst in civil matters he was an exponent of centralisation, he sent in his resignation as Viceroy because he had sense enough to foresee that a similar centralisation

in military affairs could only result during wartime in inefficiency and failure. The story of his retirement is such a curious illustration of the zig-zag and irreconcilable conclusions upon the same subject at which, under our party system, the same government may be forced to arrive, that it is worth restating at length.

In 1902 Lord Kitchener went out to India as Commander-in-Chief. He had behind him the prestige of his successful campaigns in the Sudan and the credit of bringing the desultory Boer fighting in South Africa to a negotiable conclusion. All throughout these operations he had been practically single-handed and omnipotent so far as organisation was concerned. This single-handedness became to him an obsession. He could not, and he would not, delegate. All went well with his reputation as an organiser so long as the subjects to be managed were not beyond the grasp of one man.

In 1900 the Indian system of military administration was far superior to that of the British War Office, where the Commander-in-Chief was nominally supreme over all military matters, both executive and administrative. This is an impossible combination for one man. The first class of questions with which he has to deal, viz. executive, are urgent and constant; they cannot be temporarily put on one side. But if they are thus dealt with, the official who handles them cannot give to the other class of questions, viz. reforms and administrative developments, the time and detachment necessary for their consideration. No efficiency in the fighting force can fully counteract defective organisation, transport and supplies. This was at last recognised, at home, and the old administrative functions of

the Commander-in-Chief were divided amongst a War Office Council, each member being responsible for a definite sphere of administrative work. This great military change was made by Balfour's Government just about the time Kitchener was appointed to India, and in carrying it through, inconsiderate—not to say rough—treatment was applied to the dispossessed officials at the War Office.

The first intimation Roberts, when Commander-in-Chief, had of his dismissal was contained in a note laid upon his writing-table. He was naturally much annoyed at such treatment. King Edward insisted upon an apology being subsequently made to him which to some extent soothed his feelings. The Adjutant and Quartermaster-General, the Head of the Intelligence Department and the Surveyor of the Ordnance were all similarly treated. General Nicholson (afterwards a Peer and Field-Marshal) was Head of the Intelligence Department. I had had a great deal to do with him in the past, and I always found him an absolutely first-rate official. Arnold Forster was then Secretary of State for War. I said to him one day in the lobby of the House of Commons, "Whatever may be your reasons for changing the executive officers, why did you get rid of so competent a Head of the Intelligence as Nicholson?" "Oh," replied Arnold Forster, "he has got an appointment he prefers, and he is quite ready to leave the War Office." Meeting Nicholson a few days afterwards, I repeated to him the purport of this conversation. He flushed up crimson with anger, and said, "Whoever told you that is a ——— liar, and I hope you will tell him so when you meet him. My dismissal was thus noted to me. General Grierson was an official

in my department, and under me. I found him in my room looking very uncomfortable. I said, 'What is it? What can I do for you, Grierson?' 'Don't you know?' he replied. 'I have just received notice that I am to succeed you.'"

The extraordinary lack of consideration thus shown to a group of our most distinguished generals gave very great offence to the Army and was much talked over in semi-official circles; but I have never been able to ascertain from whom these guillotine orders emanated. Certainly not from Balfour, the Prime Minister, nor do I think that Arnold Forster, the Secretary of State for War, instigated them. If these assumptions are correct, what authority was there behind them? The only intelligent explanation I can think of was that these dismissals were the work of a small Committee composed of Lord Esher, Admiral Sir John Fisher and General Sir George Clarke, who were appointed by the Cabinet to report upon the system of administration in force at the War Office and to make suggestions for its improvement. They wrote a report, putting forward very drastic changes. This report was sent to the King before the Cabinet saw it and was initialled by him, and I believe all these changes were effected either directly or indirectly by the Committee or by some member of the Committee. At any rate, by an extraordinary exercise of authority the Home Government summarily abolished the post of Commander-in-Chief in Great Britain, and distributed his functions amongst a number of officials on the ground that it was impossible for any one man to discharge all the duties associated with that high office.

Now, in India a different system prevailed. Two officials, and not one, were responsible for the

management of military affairs. First, the Military Member of Council, who dealt with general questions of policy and administrative changes and improvements. He was a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Then came the Commander-in-Chief, upon whom rested the responsibility for the fighting efficiency of the whole of the military establishments. This system, in force since the Indian Mutiny, had proved very efficient, so much so that ambitious young officers looked to India rather than to Whitehall for the most modern, up-to-date military training. Though no rule was made as to which of these two high officials had authority over the other, the system had worked well on a give-and-take principle, and both Lord Roberts and Sir Donald Stewart, two successful soldiers of exceptional experience, appreciated and fell into this system of divided work.

A few days before Lord Kitchener left to take up the post of Commander-in-Chief in India, he called upon me at Deal Castle. In conversation he said quite casually, "What are the functions and status of the Military Member of Council in India?" I described them as shortly as I could, and he then said, "I ought to be Military Member." I did not attach much importance to this remark, but the news reached me that almost immediately upon his arrival in India he fell foul of General Elles, who was then Military Member. It should, however, be added that the two preceding Commanders-in-Chief, Generals Lockhart and Palmer—the one through illness and the other from lack of administrative experience—had not sufficiently asserted their authority, and the Military Member in consequence had obtained a larger share in the military administration of India than had his predecessors.

Kitchener, however, resented all interference or restraint, and he deliberately set to work to make the position of the Military Member untenable. His object was not a judicious division of duties which it was beyond the ability of any one man to discharge, but to abolish all duality of control and to centre the combined powers in his own hands. In other words, he proposed to set up in the most compressed and exaggerated form that very system of army management which the British Government had summarily abolished in Great Britain the year before as unworkable. Balfour, the Prime Minister, was at that moment in troublous waters owing to the resignation of certain of his colleagues, and to the dismissal of Roberts and other leading soldiers, which was bitterly resented by the Army.

The conflict between Curzon and Kitchener became so hot and personal that it was clear that, whatever decision might be arrived at in the dispute, one or the other would go. Balfour was not prepared to face Kitchener's resignation, so to retain his services the Cabinet forced on India that very system of administration they had abolished in Great Britain as inefficient and ineffective. The weight of administrative authority, both past and present, was strongly against the change, but it was engineered through with some skill at the very end of the life of the existing Parliament. It was never discussed in either House, nor by the Council of India. It was sent out from this country as a mandate of the British Government.

Curzon very properly resigned, but he had his revenge when the new system collapsed under the stress of war, producing a series of military catastrophes in Mesopotamia. There was no part of the

Report of the Commission which was published in 1917 upon military operations in Mesopotamia which was more scathing in its censure than that relating to the utterly unworkable system started by Kitchener and developed by less capable successors. To give an illustration of its futility and waste of time, one has only to mention two facts. Neither the Commander-in-Chief nor any one of the Headquarters Staff had time for even one personal visit to Bombay, still less to Mesopotamia; yet Bombay was the place of embarkation for all supplies and personnel for the first two years of the Expedition and the port at which something like 60,000 sick and wounded men were subsequently landed. When the Commander-in-Chief came before the Commission as a witness, he produced in triumph a library of forty Blue Books, all beautifully written, annotated and dated by his staff on the hill-top at Simla, enumerating the different services and wants of the Expedition, both in Bombay and Mesopotamia. As a record they were perfect, but it was a grave record of literary industry and military ineptitude.

I first came across Kitchener when he was in command of the Suakim garrison. He was then a most engaging and interesting soldier. By instinct he was a born fighter—I might almost say a fire-eater—and in a daring sortie from Suakim he was badly wounded. From that day he, by force of will, metamorphosed his character as a military man, and he subordinated his fighting impetuosity to method, preparation and calculation. It was these qualities that brought him success in his great enterprises. He was in addition an admirable negotiator, forcible and conciliatory as the occasion required. His handling of Colonel Marchand at Fashoda was masterly and

evoked from Salisbury unstinted praise. He was equally successful in his relations with the Boers, but on no occasion did he exhibit this diplomatic aptitude so thoroughly as in his controversy with Curzon. By propaganda he so manipulated public opinion and the Press that Curzon's case was almost unknown and certainly not seriously studied, though it had behind it a phalanx of the best military and administrative opinion.

Kitchener's name and fame will be inseparably associated with the critical phases of the Great War. His general knowledge of European politics and the part he had taken in them in the past gave him in France a personal influence which no other English soldier had. His intense sense of duty, his hatred of self-advertisement and his iron self-control obtained from the people a spontaneous confidence far beyond that reposed in any other public man of the day. He may have made mistakes, but they were the product of an over-anxious patriot, not of a self-seeking notoriety. Upon his shoulders during this period fell a terrible burden of responsibility and decision, and his name will for ever be gratefully remembered as the incarnation of a stoical soldier and patriot.

The dissolution of Parliament was announced on September 18th, 1900. Though the war in South Africa still continued its desultory course, the Boers were beaten, and it was only a question of time as to when they would so acknowledge their defeat as to accept its reasonable application. As might have been expected with victory behind us, we scored a great polling triumph. Our opponents were disheartened and disunited, for Rosebery, Fowler, Asquith and Grey took a broad and patriotic view

of the situation. The Radicals attempted to bolster up their platform by the manufacture of false and libellous charges of misbehaviour and atrocity against our troops. Their war literature was a scandal, and the Chairman of the Committee disseminating these aspersions was a well-known writer who subsequently became a Cabinet Minister. Fair play and fair dealing are supposed to be British characteristics. How comes it to pass that in almost every national crisis that occurs a certain political group becomes reckless and unrestrained in their denunciation of their own countrymen? Is it wanton malignity or a hopeless inability to distinguish between facts and what Disraeli described as "the harebrained chatter of irresponsible frivolity"? Whatever may be the cause, the evil seems ineradicably engrained in the psychology of a certain political faction; and though it generally fails in the attainment of its immediate object, it gives colour to the Continental conviction that we are a perfidious race pursuing, under the plea of humanity and civilisation, a policy of brutality and rapacity. The Government majority was practically unimpaired by this election, and another five years of dominant authority seemed assured to the Unionist Party.

A few weeks after the electoral returns were complete, I went to Balmoral as Minister in attendance upon Her Majesty. Upon my arrival I found the Court in great perturbation and distress. The news had just arrived from South Africa of the death of Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig-Holstein, the eldest son of Princess Christian. He was a fine fellow, a *persona grata* to all who knew him, and in addition to considerable natural aptitude he possessed a considerate disposition which always prompted

him to do kind and just things in the manner agreeable to the persons affected—a valuable combination in an ordinary mortal, but invaluable in Royalty, where the opportunities for kindly notice are so much greater than those occurring in less exalted spheres of movement. He was a special favourite of the Queen, who, knowing his exceptional qualities, freely used him as an intermediary in the many trivialities and frictions which always environ a great Court.

Her Majesty was so upset at the news that she sent me a message to say that she could not see me for some days to come. When the interview did take place, I was shocked to note the marked declension in her vitality which the events of the past few months had made. There were unmistakable symptoms of an impending physical breakdown, and it was the only time in the course of my many interviews with her that there was any departure from the iron self-control which she always displayed to her Ministers. She felt acutely, not so much the isolation of her unique position, as the deprivation through death and old age of the services both of relatives and Ministers who could advise and help her in her increasing disabilities. The dual task of supervising the affairs of her ever-increasing Empire and of managing the details of her Court and entourage were getting beyond her waning strength, and she knew it. She pathetically described to me how the younger and less occupied members of the Royal Family, such as the Duke of Albany, Prince Henry of Battenberg and Prince Christian Victor, were used to her, and how they had all been taken from her and that there was no one to fill their places. The table was covered with red boxes, and many more were in the ante-

room outside. I left her presence filled with a deep feeling of loyalty and admiration for the courage and self-sacrifice which this lion-hearted little lady showed in her determination, so long as there was breath in her body, to meet the exacting calls of her incessant duties ; but associated with this sentiment was the sorrowful reflection that for a Sovereign so circumstanced there could be neither peace nor rest save in the grave.

When, two months later, a bulletin from Osborne announced that she was ill, I knew it was the end, and on January 22nd, 1901, this grand life came to a close.

The passing of the Great Queen to her last resting-place was, as pre-ordained by herself, full of dignity and simplicity. In the ship allotted to the House of Commons party, which was in the centre of the long line of ships, all wore an air of solemn expectation. A grey, still day in January, no sun, and not a breath of wind. Presently the sound of guns from the Isle of Wight announced that the procession had started, and as each ship took up the booming toll it was just possible to hear the notes of Chopin's Funeral March played by successive ships' bands. Nearer and nearer came the sorrowful procession. Then appeared some destroyers, so painted as to look even blacker than usual, steaming at an unnaturally slow pace. After them came the *Alberta*, with Admiral Fullerton rigid and immovable at the bow. At last the little ship with its precious burden came in sight—a white bier in the middle of the deck, and at each corner the figure of an Admiral standing absolutely motionless. Just as she passed, the sun, setting over the Isle of Wight, sent out one brilliant ray like a searchlight and illuminated the catafalque as if sending it on its

mournful way. .And so passed the Queen for the last time over the sea she loved so well.

The sense of a well-earned rest after a protracted period of rare responsibility and authority was beautifully conveyed to all present by this simple but most impressive pageant. Those only of the generation to which I belong, associated with and permeated, as it was, by the individuality of Queen Victoria, can understand the national gap caused by her death. It was the longest reign in the annals of the monarchy of this country, and its length was only equalled by the astounding development and progress made during that epoch in every branch of national life and well-being. With every such advance the Queen's name was personally associated. Courage, constancy, truth and high principle were the cult and ideals of her life, and the knowledge that she was so guided was the secret of the immense and ubiquitous personal influence she exercised over her people. These high qualities were associated with an exceptionally practical aptitude and discernment of character—a rare combination of governing qualities, winning for her in the history of the world a unique reputation as a successful ruler and guide.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE new King at once responded to the ordeal imposed upon him. On the first day of his reign he exhibited an ability, foresight, tact and consideration that never failed him during the remainder of his life. He had to make more than one speech on this memorable day without time either for preparation or for thought. The ceremonial ordeal was very long and exacting. As an illustration of his wonderful memory and tact I may allude to one incident personally affecting myself.

Those of his old friends who had been intimate with him and were in his Ministry wrote respectfully to congratulate him upon his accession to the Throne. He could only have received these with hundreds of other letters on the morning of his nomination by the Privy Council. Each Minister took an oath of allegiance before him. Whilst so engaged, the King took the opportunity of individually thanking in a whisper those who had so written to him, and so self-possessed was he and so thorough was his memory that even during this trying ceremony he did not forget a single one of his correspondents amongst the hundreds swearing allegiance to him.

In the interval between the Queen's death and the Coronation festivities of 1902, although little apparent change from the old régime was evinced, a good deal of unnoticed transition from the established traditions of the past reign was gradually

effected in these twelve months. New ideas, new groups, both political and social, were germinated. The older men and the ideas they had adopted and in which they had been trained began to take a back seat in public opinion ; but Lord Salisbury's Government continued for the time being almost unchanged, the only notable displacement being that of Goschen, who, upon attaining the age of seventy, retired from the House of Commons and his post of First Lord of the Admiralty. He then took his seat in the House of Lords.

Sixty-five years intervened between the coronation of King Edward and Queen Victoria, and in that period the British Empire had taken a new shape. It no longer consisted of two little islands, of scattered and unconnected Colonial outposts outside, regulated and treated more as the crew of a man-of-war than as self-governing and responsible entities. The external British Empire had grown out of all previous recognition, and in the area of territory and population, exclusive of the Continent of India, it outclassed States of antiquity and pretension. Liberal and responsible self-government had long been enjoyed by the larger of these communities, and from all these oversea territories responsible Ministers flocked to participate in the homage and ceremonial allegiance of the coronation of the Lord Paramount of this agglomeration of States.

The Coronation, attended as it was by notable representatives of all these Oversea Dominions, was an eye-opener to the more advanced Radicals, some of whom in the past had given a somewhat free eulogy to Republican organisation and ideas without realising what their application under present conditions meant. They seemed to think that every-

thing would go on much the same as before, except that an elected or nominated president would take the place of the present hereditary monarch and be the occupant of Buckingham Palace and the fountain of authority, and that, though the veneer of our institutions would be altered, the kernel and fabric it covered would, for all practical purposes, be unchanged and as adaptable and as efficient in dealing with old troubles and new problems as the previous system. They found, however, that the glamour and reverence surrounding our Throne were political and substantial assets carrying with them an influence and accepted jurisdiction which no Republican substitute could either achieve or maintain. No President, periodically selected to be the figurehead of Great Britain, could permanently command the allegiance of our great Oversea Dominions, still less that of our Indian Empire. A republic at home means the disintegration of the British Empire abroad. Sovereignty is not a mere emblem, but is the incarnation of the Imperial idea. Disturb or abolish the British monarchy, and you destroy not the summit but the whole foundation of the fabric of which it is the top. The more our statesmen came into consultation and conference with the elected representatives of our Oversea Dominions, the more was this truism impressed on all who took part in such deliberations. Deep as were the regard and reverence shown to the Throne as the binding link and inspiring influence of our Empire by those taking part in the ceremony of King Edward VII's coronation, these feelings were intensified and strengthened by the coronation ten years later of King George V.

In the last eighty years Great Britain has, under the

monarchical system, had the benefit of three successive rulers, differing from one another in their temperament, but each equally efficient in popularising the monarchical principles. In times alike of national emergency or of halcyon prosperity the monarchical principle is equally potent, equally adaptable and effective. Whilst other Empires under the ordeal of the last few years have collapsed almost beyond resuscitation, the British Empire is stronger and more solidified and united than before. Can anyone doubt that the monarchical principle, exemplified as it has been by three such great guides and leaders as Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and King George V, has been the consolidating and unifying cement of this unique edifice?

This year saw the spun-out conclusion of the South African War brought to an end. It had lasted two and a half years. Seldom has any conflict of the same duration and dimensions terminated with less bad feeling between the two warring protagonists. Both sides realised that the war was a mistake and ought to have been avoided. Both Briton and Boer felt for one another a respect and regard non-existent before the war, and upon this foundation a very generous settlement was made, for which the major credit must be given to the Radical Government of 1906 and which has since worked astoundingly well.

So soon as peace was established, Salisbury gave up the Premiership. He had been in failing health for some time past, and it was well known that he only waited for peace to lay down the burden that so overtaxed his waning strength. The disappearance of this dominant and majestic figure from political life caused a disturbance and rupture of ties and ideas

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which only began to be felt in subsequent years. The mantle of Disraeli had naturally fallen upon his shoulders, and for over twenty years with consummate skill and patience he carried on the prescient views of his former chief. During this time his task was facilitated by Gladstone's sudden adoption of the Home Rule policy for Ireland, as the more stable elements of Liberalism naturally gravitated towards a statesman whose temperament and action precluded the possibility of a similar somersault on other critical questions.

If the outward policy and internal machine of Toryism worked smoothly and progressively during this long period it was mainly due to Salisbury's devoted and unbroken absorption in the responsibilities he had undertaken. His power of work, his minute observation of what was going on, his industry and, above all, his unrivalled power of saying and writing much in few words were gifts which he did not selfishly monopolise for the use of his department or office alone. They were freely at the disposal of his colleagues. He was always accessible and responsive, and his amazing receptivity and concentration of purpose made an interview of a few minutes with him the equivalent of hours with lesser men. I was personally and officially connected with him for nearly thirty years, and I cannot over-state the kindness and confidence he showed towards me during that time. The tongue might at times be sharp, but the heart was pure gold. He was one of the two great men to whom I largely owed whatever successful promotion I achieved in politics. When Disraeli died, Salisbury and Northcote both united in carrying on his policy. The policy was perpetuated, though its founder was gone; but Salisbury's resig-

nation, synchronising as it did with other movements, broke irretrievably the link with the past. This was very soon evident. Goschen had gone two years before. Michael Beach went this year, and Devonshire might at any moment go. The abstraction of these four—Goschen, Salisbury, Beach and Devonshire—from the Cabinet took the ballast out of the ship, and when a vessel loses its trim it may drift anywhere. This quickly manifested itself by the vagaries proposed in our educational and fiscal policy. The first changes propagated the second. If we had had no Education Bill of 1902 we should have had no Tariff Reform in 1903.

The death of Lady Salisbury, who predeceased her husband by two years, was a political incident of great importance. She was a remarkable woman, capable, clever, courageous and dedicating herself heart and soul to the furtherance of her husband's views. They were a most devoted couple, and domestic life at Hatfield was on a higher plane than in any other large family with which I was acquainted. She was a very witty woman and was one of the few persons who dumbfounded Lord Derby (the Rupert of debate) by a repartee. The Derby Cabinet of 1866-7 was composed of sixteen members, three of whom—Salisbury (Cranborne as he then was), Carnarvon and General Peel—resigned on a difference with their colleagues as to the principles to be included in the proposed Reform Bill. Cranborne explained on a Monday in the House of Commons that he and his wife had spent Sunday in analysing Disraeli's figures, which they found unreliable. A reconciliation dinner was given by Derby to the Cranbornes, and Derby, who was an inveterate tease, opened his chaff by the remark: "So I hear, Lady

Cranborne, you devote your Sundays to arithmetic.”
“Yes,” she promptly replied, “and we did a very odd sum : we deducted three from sixteen, and we found nothing left.”

As the hostess of a great party in London and as châtelaine of her magnificent house at Hatfield her cheerfulness, conversational powers and sense of humour were unfailing, and though she had a sharp vocabulary, her kindness and generosity to her guests were unceasing, whilst the courage and dexterity with which she faced every trouble, either social or political, won for her general admiration.

The removal of two such friends as she and her husband had, both to my wife and myself, made life generally drearier, and politics for the future became rather a penance than a pleasure.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE freeing of elementary education from the payment of fees by the parents had been in operation for more than a decade and had worked unevenly. The arrangement then made was to pay from the Exchequer to every school a fee of threepence per week on the average attendance. Under the Education Act of 1870 fees could be paid by the parents up to ninepence a week ; but the statistical analysis made of school fees previous to their remission showed that throughout the country they averaged per child threepence a week, and this was accepted by and paid to the schools as their compensation for the abolition of the old payment by the parents. In the richer manufacturing districts the schools with high fees even up to the maximum of ninepence were popular with certain of the wage-earning class. They were a guarantee against the admission of the poorer and less healthy children into the school, and the high fee plus the education grant gave the managers the financial resources necessary to attract exceptional teachers. In fact, they were the best schools in their respective districts ; but the reduction of the fee from ninepence a week to threepence put them in financial difficulties.

Some of these schools were in Arthur Balfour's Parliamentary division. Whether or not this was the primary cause of his action I cannot say, but at any rate Balfour determined by a new Bill to alter the relative status of voluntary and board-schools

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the denominational and Nonconformist sections of the Liberal-Unionist Party had taken place, and Chamberlain had to face the consequences of his colleague's educational venture. I believe that his subsequent course of action was inspired quite as much by an attempt to resuscitate his political influence as to transform our fiscal system.

Two proposals for a reduction of taxation were before the Government—one relating to the income tax, upon which there was no difference of opinion, and the other to the tea duties. At the last moment Ritchie abandoned the reduction of the tea duties and announced the proposed abolition of the shilling duty upon corn. In favour of this change he quoted a memorandum from the Chief Whip urging, on behalf of many of our best supporters, the repeal of a tax which was very unpopular and politically awkward to defend. Subsequently it transpired that the real reason for this proposed abolition was Chamberlain's objection to its being retained unless associated with Preference. The suggested abolition of this tax at once raised a fiscal controversy in which the Prime Minister and Chamberlain both took part. The latter laid down publicly a general policy of Preference and the taxation of food which he advocated as essential to Imperial unity and development. A subsequent discussion took place in the House of Commons in which the Prime Minister endeavoured to explain away Chamberlain's utterances. The speech was adroit and would have passed muster if it had stood alone; but Chamberlain intervened subsequently in the debate, and his intervention gave quite a different complexion to the Prime Minister's speech from that which it assumed when left to itself.

and put them upon the rates. No doubt a good many of the voluntary schools were in financial difficulties and required some kind of additional support, but several of my colleagues, including the most experienced, doubted—so far as primary education was concerned—the wisdom of or necessity for these new proposals, and the provisions relating to denominational schools were abhorrent to the whole left wing of Nonconformists. Its introduction was certain to disintegrate the Liberal-Unionist organisation and thus disturb the effective working of the existing alliance between them and the Conservatives.

Balfour was pertinacious, and by the display of determined leadership carried this Bill in the teeth of violent Nonconformist opposition. This put Chamberlain in a position of some perplexity. He had in the past been the governing spirit of opposition to all denominational schools, but with his usual courage and assurance he made out a justifiable case for his change of opinion. He then left for South Africa, where his presence was urgently required. Throughout this period he behaved with great constancy and loyalty and thus placed Arthur Balfour under serious obligation to him for the attitude he assumed during the whole of this controversy.

Before Chamberlain left he raised an informal and brief discussion upon our fiscal system, and he assumed—and I am sure with good faith—that the majority of his colleagues were inclined to his views. He returned a few days before the Budget of 1903-4 officially came before the Government for discussion, Ritchie being Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In the meantime the rupture anticipated between

the denominational and Nonconformist sections of the Liberal-Unionist Party had taken place, and Chamberlain had to face the consequences of his colleague's educational venture. I believe that his subsequent course of action was inspired quite as much by an attempt to resuscitate his political influence as to transform our fiscal system.

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The House adjourned for the Whitsuntide holidays, and during the recess the Prime Minister received from his colleagues, including myself, strong protests against the language and action of Chamberlain. There was a general demand that if the Government was to continue in its entirety it should be publicly stated that Chamberlain spoke only for himself. At a subsequent meeting the question was discussed, and Chamberlain found himself in such a minority that he had serious thoughts of resigning. From this step he was dissuaded by the Prime Minister.

On the second reading of the Finance Bill the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave expression to unequivocal Free Trade sentiments, but he also expressed his willingness to agree to an enquiry into the working of our fiscal system. It became obvious to the public that there was a serious difference of opinion in the Cabinet upon a question of vital importance. In the Cabinet itself the following compromise was arrived at—first, that material should be collected, collated and published upon the working of our fiscal system to enable the Government collectively to arrive at definite conclusions ; and secondly, that for the remainder of the session no member of the Government should either by speech or by writing publicly deal with this subject unless compelled to do so by Parliamentary notice. Chamberlain, however, stated that he intended to circulate pamphlets and leaflets through a Birmingham organisation upon certain aspects of the question. A nominal truce was thus established, so far as public meetings or speeches were concerned ; but, on the other hand, Chamberlain at once set to work to create a great organisation. Leaflets were distributed by the million, the Press (at least the great bulk of the

Unionist papers) were captured, and a wholesale system of canvassing and lobbying in the House of Commons was established, and the local caucuses were indoctrinated by every conceivable method with the new faith and policy.

These pamphlets caused great annoyance to a large section of the Cabinet and of the Unionist Party, and although they seemed to infringe the idea of a truce, not an effort was made by the Prime Minister to stop them. A few days before the close of the session two documents were circulated to the Government—one a White Paper entitled "Insular Free Trade," and another on blue paper proposing a scheme by which through Preference and Retaliation our existing tariff system was to be modified and changed. Both these documents came up for discussion by the Cabinet on the last day of the session. During this period of the so-called truce a considerable change had taken place in the personal opinions of the Cabinet. The Prime Minister had been talked round by Chamberlain; but the Blue Paper was a still more conspicuous instance of the Prime Minister's conversion. Anyone who read it would see at once that though it placed limitations upon the operation of Preference and Retaliatory Duties, it accepted the principles of both. To the contents of this paper four members of the Cabinet (of whom I was one) objected strongly and persistently, and certainly, in my judgment, they had far the best of the argument. The Cabinet was then adjourned.

On September 14th the Cabinet met again. In the meantime two elections had occurred, and in each case the Chamberlain candidate was defeated, and the reports of the election agents were unfavourable to the taxation of food.

The Cabinet was unable to agree upon a common definition of their fiscal views, and resignations, including my own, followed. This is now ancient history, but in case anyone interested in the controversy should care to gauge the nature and scope of our disagreement he can refer to the speech I made to my constituents at Ealing on October 22nd, 1903, explaining my reasons for declining to associate myself with the new fiscal adventure. The arguments and facts of my speech still, I think, hold good, and my prophecy of party disaster has been realised to the very letter.

Quite independent of fiscal questions there was a duality in our leadership which foreboded failure. Different as they were in their characteristics, Balfour and Chamberlain each possessed to a pre-eminent degree certain qualities of political leaders. Balfour's philosophical temperament and indifference to attack and exceptional powers of dialectical explanation made him a master of original and tenacious defence. Chamberlain's impulsive and imperious temperament, disregard of detail and convention and rare powers of aggressive speech made him the born leader of political forlorn hopes; but coupled together as the leaders of a single party they were a hopeless combination. One pushed the other into positions he did not fancy, and the other then covered the action or retreat of his colleague as best might be with explanations of which the other colleague had not thought. The party, in the meantime, was tumbling to pieces, not knowing what to think or do. Under either leader it would have done better than it could do under both.

As an illustration as to how duality of leadership embarrasses and breaks up a party, let us take the

Education Bill of 1902 and the Tariff Reform Scheme of 1903.

Chamberlain was wholly averse to the educational changes. Balfour kicked as hard as he could against Tariff Reform. Both schemes in the long run became the policy of the Unionist Party, yet if the party had been individually canvassed upon either set of propositions I am certain that the large majority would have been against both.

Shortly before his death I had an interview with my old chief, Salisbury. He was then a doomed man, but for a short time he spoke to me with his old brilliancy and decision. He was emphatic in his disapproval of dual leadership. He pointed out that it was contrary to the spirit and conception of responsible Parliamentary government, and would bring any party thus conducted to real political disaster. I was fortified and encouraged to find that my old chief's views were identical with my own.

In September the resignations became known, and after a thirty-year tenure of a Front Bench seat in the House of Commons I lapsed into an unofficial unit of insignificance, and there I remained till the dissolution of 1905. I had, however, the satisfaction of remembering that I had held against all comers the same constituency for nearly thirty-eight years (for my later seat was but a section of my original constituency) and that we repelled all attacks within that area, no matter from what quarter they came, until Tariff Reform smashed us. Under our system of party discipline and management a Minister who has left the Cabinet upon a subject which has become the burning question of the day finds himself in an invidious and at times very embarrassing position. If he carries any weight in the country he is at once

beslabbered with praise as a far-seeing statesman by the very newspapers and speakers who had previously tried to make his official existence untenable by criticism and abuse. His aid and co-operation are asked, not so much to further the one question on which he is at variance with his late colleagues as to upset and destroy the Government with whom on other questions he is in accord.

Tariff Reform, in the shape in which it was advocated, made it certain that whenever an appeal to the country on the policy so propagated was made, the Tariff Reformers would be smashed hip and thigh from Dan even to Beersheba. The only possible antidote against this débâcle was to throw out the Unionist administration, but that meant bringing into office a Separatist and Radical Government. Those who agreed with the resigning Ministers (and I believe they constituted, if not a majority of our party, something very like it) found themselves powerless for good. To sit still and do nothing in the House of Commons when votes of censure were moved but at the same time to lay before mixed audiences our fiscal views was the utmost we could do. For some time previous to the general election my friends and I declined to speak anywhere. We found that our action met with such approval at those meetings that we endangered the seats of those we wished to retain.

A distinguished member of the Unionist Party who had been a Lancashire member lost his seat in the political landslide. Meeting him after the election, I expressed my regret at his defeat. He replied, "It is all very well for you to say this, but your speech at Blackburn six months before the election lost us twenty seats in Lancashire alone." I retorted

that I did not put my speaking very high; but if one speech from me could have such an effect, how very poor must be the policy it attacked.

Granting, as I fully did, that our tariff and customs policy required revision and change with the intention of giving us more power in negotiation and bargaining, that system should have been attacked where it was weak and illogical, not where it was strong and popular. Its great merit lay in the fact that it had cheapened food, especially bread, and the wage-earning class had benefited during the last thirty years more by the fall in the price of food than by a rise of wage. To herald to the English proletariat a new policy in the formula that the British Empire would tumble to pieces unless it adopted a preferential tariff and that a preferential tariff meant the taxation of food was to destroy the propaganda almost before it had been enunciated. There was an assailable side in our tariff arrangements and one where an assault would have been effective and successful.

The French Treaty of 1860 negotiated by Cobden was the starting-point and preamble of our subsequent foreign commercial arrangements; but the Treaty of 1860 was not based upon Free Trade but upon the principles of Reciprocity. In the first Parliament of which I was a member this treaty was strongly denounced by the old orthodox Free Traders: They foresaw what it must lead to. A nation who unreservedly adopts the free admission of all foreign products cannot on such a foundation bargain when it has nothing to offer in return. If unlimited Free Trade is to prevail, let us stop pretending to negotiate upon Reciprocity. If Reciprocity is our policy, then let us adjust our customs systems so as to make it

effective. I wanted Chamberlain to take this limited line of advance, but he had become so enamoured with the idea of fostering Colonial wheat that he would not listen to the suggestion. Yet in combination we had made a most successful start upon the foreign sugar duties.

India produced an enormous amount of coarse sugar. Germany and Austria proposed to smash this industry by heavy export sugar bounties and cheap freight to India. Such a policy would have so damaged the sugar production that the whole of India was ready to accept any reasonable protective measure. We proposed countervailing duties just sufficient to counteract the bounties. Our proposals met with unanimous approval in India. In the House of Commons, where Fowler moved an uncompromising Manchester School resolution, we knocked him and his arguments to pieces and obtained a very large majority. Chamberlain argued the question from the Protective side, I from the standpoint of Free Trade. As the result of our counteraction to bounty-fed sugar, the whole system of bounties was greatly modified, and the amount of artificial assistance rendered was largely reduced.

We thus promoted the true cause of free trading in the teeth of the protests of doctrinaires, and it would not have been difficult to secure similarly good results if Tariff Reform had not run amok at the cause of cheap bread. However, the mischief was done, and the Unionist Party suffered three successive heavy defeats in the next three elections.

Now comes the tragedy of the situation. Chamberlain's resilience, audacity, disregard of convention and precedent marked him out as the man the best qualified to get the party out of the mess in which

it found itself. Just at the moment when such a service would have been of inestimable value both to the party and country he was struck down by paralysis. Being above all things a single-handed man, he never had first-class lieutenants, and the poor Unionist Party blundered on, accumulating misfortunes by making mistake after mistake in other directions but still hoisting the detested flag of taxation on bread.

But out of the evil came good. The Unionist Party was not in power when Germany made an attempt to subjugate Europe. If the Unionists had then constituted the Government, would the Radical and Labour Party have given them wholehearted assistance against Germany? The position being reversed, whatever doubts or trepidation existed, they were not to be found in the Unionist Party but in the Pacifist ranks of the Radical Government or their supporters. It was there alone that hesitancy and indecision prevailed. By the fact that the Unionists were in opposition Europe and civilisation were saved, and the Tariff Reformers may put this to the credit of their otherwise disastrous adventure.

CHAPTER XXXV

HOLDING the views I did it seemed clear to me that my duty for the time being was to keep out of Parliament. Things and ideas might so change later on as to give me the legitimate chance of helping my old colleagues and friends without aiding and abetting them in their present untoward course. I had had far more than my fair share of office—thirteen years at the India Office, two in the Education Department and seven at the Admiralty, making with my chairmanship of the London School Board a total of over twenty-three years' official service out of a Parliamentary life of thirty-eight. Still, I was reluctant to dissociate myself wholly from public life, for I felt that I had yet some years of work left in me which might possibly be useful in promoting improvement and reform in spheres of work outside the ambit of purely party politics.

One evening Ritchie said to me, "The Government are about to appoint a Commission to overhaul and reform our system of Poor Law Reform. I am alarmed lest I should be asked to be the Chairman." "Why?" I said. "Because it would be a most stupendous job. There is hardly a detail in our social, industrial and financial life which may not come under its purview. But," he added, "much can be done by classification and otherwise to ameliorate the status of those relieved and to sweep away methods of administration both antiquated and unfair."

Ritchie suddenly died while on a visit to Dudley at Biarritz. His death came as a great surprise. He was a big strong man and showed no sign whatever of failure. I had a very great regard for him. He was somewhat clumsy and tactless in his speeches, and he lacked the benefits of a literary education, but within these limits he was a first-rate man of affairs. His judgment was excellent, his courage unquestioned, and he had singular powers of pushing matters through the House of Commons. He was straightforwardness itself and a most pleasant companion.

It was no doubt owing to his death that I became Chairman of this enquiry, which lasted five years and was by far the heaviest business in which I was ever engaged. Our evidence, oral and written, covered 7,000 pages of printed matter. The composition of the Commission was on the lines of selecting the most prominent advocates known of different and conflicting schools of thought, persons who would have been admirable witnesses but who had preconceived judgment upon many subjects referred to them. The task of keeping them together was very tiring, and at times impossible. Although successive Governments have shied at giving general effect to our sweeping recommendations, they have one by one under pressure of economic and industrial strife been adopted, and no changes whatever have been made contrary to our recommendations.

The general deduction I formed from this exhaustive investigation was that certain classes of the community, especially amongst the lower grades of unskilled labour, had not then obtained their legitimate share of the country's increased prosperity. All the labour disturbances, strikes and commotions

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have a common origin—a desire on the part of the wage-earners to have a larger share of the good things of this world than they had previously had, and, in my judgment, their general claim was well founded; but in trying to meet it we must be very careful not to jeopardise the sources and foundation of their employment. Let us not forget, as has often been said, that the object and incitement of the nineteenth century was to accumulate wealth, whilst the duty of the twentieth century is the far more difficult task of securing its better distribution.

So I made my bow to the Mother of Parliaments, to whose kindly tuition I was so much indebted, and from the vantage-coign of disinterested aloofness I watched for many years her subsequent behaviour. Almost all the evils and ailments of the House of Commons of my day have become deepened and intensified under the increasing pressure of post-war problems. Members are worked threadbare, Ministers are constantly retiring to rest-cures, human flesh and intellect are ground to impotence by the remorseless treadmill of endless attendance and purposeless interrogation. They have neither the time to think nor the requisite vigour to act. The terrific taxation in force (and likely to remain) has knocked out of Parliamentary life its most useful and brilliant member, the ambitious and capable young man of moderate means who was a full-timer. The House of Commons is no longer a place for him; he must work outside for his livelihood. Devolution and delegation are the only hope of salvation of this over-burdened and exhausted assembly. Wireless telegraphy and by air have brought the Dominions nearer to us, and measures at our

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